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**NORDIC WAVE
A STUDY OF THE RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE OF
SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN IN AUSTRALIA**

by

Robert Stewart Bell

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of The Australian National University.

October 2007

Declaration

As the author of this thesis, I declare it to be my own original work and that to the best of my knowledge it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Stewart Bell', with a small horizontal line extending from the end.

Robert Stewart Bell

29 October 2007

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For first-hand information on the central case study in this thesis, the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition which so captured my interest when, aged 21, I first saw it in 1968, I thank its Secretary-General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg. Her gracious welcome thirty-one years later, when I contacted her in Oslo to discuss her role in the project, was repeated on each of my subsequent visits. She has shared her memories and documentation with me and provided the most valuable of links to the exhibition, as well as enduring friendship. In a similar way, the exhibition's designer, Antti Nurmesniemi and his wife, Vuokko Nurmesniemi, warmly welcomed me in Helsinki and provided valuable insights and documentation on the exhibition. It is my great regret that Antti died during the course of this research and that I am not able to share my conclusions with him.

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artists and colleagues in design and decorative arts museums and craft centres, as well as to examine the official records of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition held in the *Taidekorkeakoulujen Keskusarkisto*, the Archives of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design in Helsinki. I received dedicated attention from its archivist, Auli Suortti-Vuorio, to my requests for information about the exhibition, and I thank her and her colleagues for their unfailing interest and assistance. Dr Anne Stenros, as the Director of Design Forum Finland, shared valuable insights into Finland's design history and collaborated with me on several exhibition and writing projects on subjects related to this thesis.

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I dedicate this work to my father, John Stewart Bell, who died shortly before its completion, in August 2007.

Robert Bell

Abstract

This thesis investigates the reception and influence of Scandinavian design in Australia from 1950 to 1980, resulting from the exposure to Scandinavian-made and designed products presented in trade displays, exhibitions, retail stores and art galleries, and the reporting of these events in the media. The study also investigates the influence of Scandinavian-trained designers in Australia, individual agents and writers, and the work of craft and design industry professionals, through case studies that illustrate their proactive roles in adapting Scandinavian models of practice for an Australian context.

The major 1968 touring exhibition of Scandinavian-designed applied arts, *Design in Scandinavia*, is used as the prime case study to illustrate the significance of Scandinavian design as a model for practice in Australia during this period. This event, specifically developed for Australia by four Scandinavian design industry organisations, was presented in five of Australia's State art museums, a university and a department store, providing a major focus for discussion about design in the context of the visual arts at a formative period of development of the Australian crafts and design industry. Concurrent with the participating galleries' aims of 'educating taste', the exhibition was also used by its organisers to reinforce the cultural value of the Scandinavian industrial products and applied arts that were already on the Australian market.

This study shows how *Design in Scandinavia*, and the exhibitions of other Scandinavian-designed products that preceded and followed it, fostered a 'culture of comparison' and fuelled discussions about Australia's supposed inadequacy in matters of design. These events were to have ramifications that continue to inform current craft and design practice in Australia. By assessing these projects against the cultural framework of Australian craft and design developments of the late 1960s and 1970s, this study shows how a relationship between diplomacy and trade was developed to serve a Scandinavian agenda for influence in a new market while creating a greater public awareness in Australia of the design achievements of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway. These events and other models of Scandinavian design practice offered ways for Australian designers, makers, and their audiences to consider Scandinavian objects as exemplars of responsible production and social relevance in the construction of a form of modernity imbued with a distinct sense of place.

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Abbreviations used in this thesis:

AGDC:	Australian Gallery Directors' Council
AGNSW:	Art Gallery of New South Wales
AGWA:	Art Gallery of Western Australia
ARP:	Axel Rappe papers
CA:	Craft Australia
CB:	Crafts Board of the Australia Council
DFT:	David Foulkes Taylor
DIS:	<i>Design in Scandinavia</i> exhibition
DISF:	<i>Design in Scandinavia</i> exhibition file
NCM:	Nordic Council of Ministers
NGV:	National Gallery of Victoria
PHM:	Powerhouse Museum
TK:	Taidekorkeakoulujen Keskusarkisto (Finnish Society of Craft and Design Archives)
UTW:	Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg

Australian Government Publishing Service style is used in this document, with minimal capitalisation of formal book titles and articles, and maximum capitalisation of event, exhibition and artwork titles and organisation names.

Preface

My interest in the subject of this thesis developed after I visited the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in February 1968 (fig.1), on the day that it opened.¹ By this time, I had been working for a year as an exhibits and graphic designer for the adjacent Western Australian Museum, while also developing my own studio craft practice in ceramics and textiles. Both of these aspects of my work were strongly influenced by the exhibition's presentation and content.



Fig. 1
Visitors to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth, February 1968, the author pictured in lower left (above slide no. 29)

¹ The author, at age 21, was (unknowingly) photographed by the exhibition's Secretary General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, as a visitor to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Western Australia during its first weekend in February 1966. This photo montage (Ill. 1), showing visitors at the Perth venue, with the author pictured (in white shirt) at lower left, in image 29, appeared in her exhibition report, *Design in Scandinavia Australien 1968: Sluttrapport om en nordisk konstindustriutställning*, Stockholm, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, 1970. Also shown (in black dress, pointing) in this montage, in image 35 at top left, is the Western Australian graphic artist, Janne Hendry, later, as Janne Ormerod, an Oxford, UK-based children's book writer and illustrator. Behind her (with glasses, obscured) is the author's colleague, David Bailey, Western Australian Museum display designer and later, as David Bergen, a Netherlands-based science-fiction illustrator.

On joining the Art Gallery of Western Australia staff in 1978, as its inaugural Curator of Craft and Design, I was in a position to research, re-catalogue and develop its small collection of Scandinavian applied arts (most of which had been acquired from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition), an opportunity that resulted in my curatorship of several exhibitions of material from this region.² As a curator, I had both responsibility for and ready access to the Art Gallery of Western Australia's Scandinavian collection as well as its supporting archival documentation and correspondence about the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, which had begun its year-long Australian tour at the Western Australian Art Gallery (as it was then named) in February 1968. This experience later underpinned my interest in developing this PhD thesis. My initial exposure to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Western Australia and subsequent professional design and museum career in Perth provided me with a particular regional perspective from which I have drawn in preparing and assessing several of the case studies used in this thesis.

During the course of this research, and on several occasions prior to its formal commencement, I interviewed the key people involved in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition project and examined almost all of the relevant correspondence in archives in Australia, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm. I undertook Swedish language classes during 2001 and 2002 in order to be able to read some of the documentation related to this research. This was helpful insofar as I was subsequently able to recognise the main topics and subjects of the Swedish texts and identify those that required further professional translation, and to gain a sense of the rhetoric used by the organisers in the presentation of the event.

In Australia, I interviewed, and read reports from some of the directors and staff members of museums participating in the exhibition tour; people who had owned, operated or were involved in businesses related to the importation and promotion of Scandinavian products; journalists who reported on the exhibition and others involved in design and craft organisations and design education. I also sought the views on this subject of numerous people who were the targets of these promotional strategies, many

² Of these, the most relevant to this research were the exhibitions: *Scandinavian Craft and Design* (in 1987); *Nature as Object: Craft and Design from Japan, Finland and Australia* (in 1998); and *Baltic Nouveau: Scandinavian Craft and Design 1898–1998* (in 2000), all held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia; and *Transformations: The Language of Craft*, held at the National Gallery of Australia in 2005.

of whom became lifelong devotees of Scandinavian design as a result of their exposure to Scandinavian-designed products.

My own reading—some of it from an early age— on this subject has also informed my views, and in this thesis I have attempted to question my assumptions on the subject of Scandinavian design made from this exposure. As much of this was through contemporary journal articles and exhibition catalogues, I have endeavoured to return to those primary sources and interrogate them in the light of the wider research occasioned by this thesis.

I have focused research on a detailed analysis of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition development and its aftermath within a cultural framework of Australian art and design developments of the 1960s and 1970s. I have paralleled this research with investigation into the development of the Australian market for imported Scandinavian products with a high design value, and the resulting stimulation of the local production of similar products. While the general parameter for this research is from 1950 to 1980, a brief assessment has been made of the relationship between Scandinavian design and Australian developments in the field in the prior and following decades in order to place this focus period in a wider framework of twentieth century design and its manifestations in Australia.

Introduction

This thesis investigates the significant influence of Scandinavian design and applied arts on design and craft practice in Australia in the period from 1950 to the mid-1980s. It reveals how the development, presentation and positive reception of a number of exhibitions and promotions of Scandinavian designed and made products successfully served a Scandinavian cultural and trade agenda for increased market influence in Australia. These objectives were part of a practised strategy on the Scandinavian governments' parts that was applied to a number of other markets, but their impact in Australia revealed more about Australians' emerging confidence in their own potential as designers and makers—and as discriminating consumers—than could have been predicted. The thesis argues that this exposure to Scandinavian achievements in design came at a critical period in the development of an Australian design and crafts industry, as new models of practice were being embraced, and shows how markets and audiences for them developed.

The comparative effect brought about by the presentation of products from countries similar in population to Australia was to broaden Australians' understanding of how design and the emerging contemporary practices of the crafts could be reconfigured as potent and relevant forms of cultural expression. This new paradigm stimulated established and emerging designers and crafts practitioners to embark on research into Australia's material culture and natural environment, and encouraged them to articulate the results through the design and production of expressive objects. This thesis shows how this resulted in diverse models of practice, through which designed and crafted products developed a distinct meaning and accent, located as firmly in our own physical and cultural environment as the Scandinavians had demonstrated so spectacularly and confidently with their own products.

This thesis is divided into three parts: Part One, *The way to make us envious: the Design in Scandinavia exhibition of 1968*, is a detailed case study of the major 1968–1969 touring exhibition, *Design in Scandinavia*, which was organised specifically for Australia by the joint Finnish, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian societies for craft and industrial design. This exhibition toured in Australia in collaboration with the Australian Galleries Directors' Conference, a working group of the directors of the State art

galleries of Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania; the David Jones Art Gallery in Adelaide and the Australian National University in Canberra.

As this exhibition provided the major concentrated public exposure to Scandinavian design during the period under study, its development and reception is investigated in depth through examination of the seven-year correspondence between all parties involved in the planning, realisation and assessment of the project. The result of this research shows how the planning and presentation of the exhibition fostered a relationship between diplomacy and trade in order to achieve the short and long-term objectives of the project from the economic and cultural perspectives of the Scandinavian countries and Australia. The exhibition was a pivotal point of reference, used by its organisers to reinforce the cultural value of the Scandinavian applied arts and industrially-designed products that were already available on the Australian market, as a result of their introduction during the previous decade.³ Concurrent with the exhibition's participating venues' aims of 'educating taste', it provided the means for its Australian recipients to consider Scandinavian-designed and made industrial and handcrafted products as exemplars of good design, craftsmanship, responsible production and social relevance.

The development, realisation and reception of this exhibition are considered within the discussions on rhetoric outlined by Richard Buchanan⁴ and Hanno Ehses.⁵ Both have argued that rhetorical principles have historically been transferred to fields such as architecture and design, in the practice of the art of persuasion. This reading is explored to demonstrate how the exhibition made a difference to the way that design and crafts were accorded cultural value in Australia.

Examination and assessment of the original official and unofficial documentation about the exhibition from its conception to conclusion reveals the influence of a number of individuals who played crucial roles in its rationale, planning and realisation.⁶

³ The introduction of these products was through trade displays, dedicated sales promotions and exhibits in department and specialty stores, and visually through articles in newspapers and popular and professional journals. These are discussed in detail in Parts Two and Three.

⁴ R Buchanan, 'Declaration by design: Rhetoric, argument and demonstration in design practice', in V Margolin (ed.), *Design discourse: History, theory, criticism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989, pp. 91–110.

⁵ H J Ehses, 'Representing Macbeth: A case study in visual rhetoric', Margolin, op. cit., pp. 187–197.

⁶ The archival material and other sources of information used in this study are listed in the References.

The exhibition's staging, content and reception are examined in some detail, showing its importance as a device in the widening of public interest in the subject of design and studio craft and in broadening the acquisition and exhibition policies of Australian public art museums. This examination also encompasses the range of commentary of the event, revealing the extent of interest in the subject from specialist and general writers and critics.

The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition catalogue, *Design in Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden*,⁷ and its subsequent report, *Design in Scandinavia-Australien 1968: Sluttrapport om en nordisk konstindustriutställning*,⁸ have provided the most important direct reference to this main case study. While the catalogue is limited in its text, what is stated places the project into the framework of the aspirations of the Scandinavian and Australian partners in the project. The report, published only in Swedish, has provided information and statistics about the event, which was cross-referenced with papers sourced from the Archives of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design. The similarly formatted exhibition catalogue and report from the North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition of 1954–1957 provided an important early reference in my assessment of the role of that event in shaping the framework for the subsequent similar Australian exhibition.

This research showed how a growing exposure to Scandinavian design that developed in Australia from the early 1950s led to the *Design in Scandinavia* project being developed and presented in Australia's premier cultural venues. Examination of the correspondence between parties involved in the planning, realisation and assessment of this exhibition revealed how the relationship between diplomacy and trade was successfully used to achieve the project's aims from both Scandinavian and Australian perspectives. While Sweden, through the auspices of its *Svenska Slöjdföreningen*, was the organising country, the exhibition's success was largely due to the proactive agency of Finnish diplomatic and commercial interests in Australia, roles that are examined in depth in this study.⁹

⁷ Hård af Segerstad, *Design in Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden*, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Stockholm, 1968.

⁸ Svenska Slöjdföreningen (U Tarras-Wahlberg, ed.), *Design in Scandinavia-Australien 1968: Sluttrapport om en nordisk konstindustriutställning*, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Stockholm, 1970.

The report is written in Swedish with a section quoting selected Australian media reviews in English.

⁹ The composition of the exhibition, however, reveals the depth of design experience then current in all of the participating countries and the quality of research among their design professionals who brought it about. Finland's later proactive role came about within the framework of the Australian tour.

Part Two, *Creating a culture of comparison*, places this exhibition in the wider historical context of the development of Scandinavian design in the twentieth century, and shows how its ideology and methodology were interpreted in the context of Australian design and crafts during a period of reform and consolidation in the late 1960s and 1970s. From the early 1950s, for those outside the Nordic world, the term ‘Scandinavian design’ emerged as a persuasive Nordic cultural construction. In this country, it fuelled discussions among design industry professionals and commentators about Australia’s supposed inadequacies in matters of design. These dialogues created a culture of comparison that was to have ramifications in the crafts and design fields for the following thirty years, as Australian designed and made goods were held up for examination against well-developed, imported objects from Scandinavian manufacturers.

The thesis examines a particular period in time—the early 1950s to the late 1970s—when the trade and export ambitions of the craft and design organisations of four Scandinavian countries aligned with the ambition of Australian cultural institutions to stimulate Australian design practice and to create an appreciation in this country of relevant modern craft and design in the wider context of contemporary visual art. This aim was clearly stated by the Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham, in his 1968 introduction to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition catalogue:

The Australian Galleries some time ago decided that they would exhibit not only the “fine arts” of painting and sculpture, but those parallel arts which by their acceptance in public use furthered the whole conception of the need for educating taste in the community in all its widest manifestations [...] We feel quite sure that this exhibition of the best products of arts, crafts, and industrial design of the Scandinavian countries will not only demonstrate their undoubted creative abilities but will materially help our own country to progress in these fields.¹⁰

This research will demonstrate how closely aligned these objectives were and how successful this strategy was in eventually stimulating the design, production and

¹⁰ H Missingham, ‘Introduction’, in U Hård af Segerstad, *Design in Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden*, op. cit., p.5.

marketing of Australian-made goods that were directly influenced by Scandinavian models of design and practice.

In the context of contemporary design promotion, Missingham's aims aligned with the work of several Scandinavian writers on design. Of the most widely known and accessible texts available in the early 1960s, Ulf Hård af Segerstad's *Scandinavian design* (translated into seven languages, including English)¹¹ and Erik Zahle's *A treasury of Scandinavian design*,¹² were critical in revealing the advanced state of Scandinavian design. Hård af Segerstad's text introduced the concept of four Nordic countries sharing and developing one tradition of design. This was a theme that he was to pursue in later writing, specifically in 'Four countries: One tradition of design', the introductory essay for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition catalogue and for the lead catalogue essay for the *Scandinavian Crafts* exhibition in Japan a decade later.¹³

These writers' work paralleled that of the influential Australian writer and design critic, Robin Boyd, whose broadcasts, essays and books of the 1950s and 1960s describing the failings of Australian design had spurred critical discourse on matters of architecture and design. Boyd's and other commentators' lauding of Scandinavian models of design practice is examined for its impact on a developing understanding of the value of the Scandinavian example to the local context.

The understanding of the Scandinavian design industry and its example for Australia was partially mediated through Britain. Australian designers who gravitated to the United Kingdom in the post-WWII period encountered a strong British appreciation of Scandinavian design that had been developing since its introduction there in the 1930s. The study outlines some of the British businesses and events promoting Scandinavian merchandise that were encountered by visiting Australian designers and retailers.

The proactive role of commercial agents in promoting Scandinavian products was crucial in the introduction of this type of merchandise into the Australian market. Few in number, these agents took on entrepreneurial roles, with several acting as intermediaries between manufacturers and galleries. This study examines the background to these businesses and the careers of those who ran them, showing the

¹¹ U Hård af Segerstad, *Scandinavian design*, Nordisk Rotogravyr, Stockholm, 1961.

¹² E Zahle, *A treasury of Scandinavian design*, Golden Press, New York, 1961.

¹³ U Hård af Segerstad, 'Four countries: One culture of form', *Scandinavian crafts*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1978, pp. 31–34 (Eng. trans.).

value of their roles in the promotion of Scandinavian applied arts beyond the parameters of their commercial interests. The study shows the critical part played by several official representatives of the Scandinavian countries in Australia in negotiating cultural projects such as the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. They used their offices and connections to foster relationships between trade and cultural interests, acting as persuasive intermediaries in securing agreements between Australian and Scandinavian cultural organisations.

Part Three, *Nordic resonances in craft and design in Australia 1968–1978*, focuses on the direct outcomes of the engagement with Scandinavian design in Australia since the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. While the exhibition was a key design event in 1968, its influence has been assessed in the context of other Australian design and craft enterprises developed during the wider period under study that responded to and engaged with Scandinavian design ideals, methodologies and the achievements of its practitioners and industries. These included trade exhibitions, museum exhibitions, the entrepreneurial activities of agents and retailers, the development of craft training and support organisations, and the work of individual designers and craft practitioners. The work of several Scandinavian immigrant designers and crafts practitioners is assessed to illustrate their influence on Australia's emergent design and craft sectors, as well as to show the influence of the Australian environment on their work. The impact of their work, their roles in the formation and work of craft organisations and the development of the collections of two State art museums are analysed through case studies for each of these sectors.

The *Design in Scandinavia* project was a persuasive vehicle by which Australian art museums began to engage with their audiences on the subject of design. In particular, the integration of contemporary Scandinavian design with two State galleries' decorative arts collections began to provide those institutions with an authoritative position in matters of design and craft promotion in relation to other arts at a critical time in the development of the visual arts in Australia. These activities developed along with unique and large-scale cultural projects such as the protracted realisation of Jørn Utzon's design for the Sydney Opera House, a Danish-Australian design collaboration played out in an unintentional but suitably theatrical manner on the doorstep of Australia's major city. This project brought the issue of design—and the hitherto unknown work of a Danish architect—to the forefront of public discussion and opinion.

In the four decades since the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition tour, Australian design and craft practices have developed to reflect an increasing awareness of the value of responding to regional environments and cultures. Although the Scandinavian approach to design endured as a paradigm for those practices, its wider influence dimmed as other design movements and models of practice gained a share of the market and the imagination of a younger generation of designers, retailers and commentators.

Current research on Scandinavia's design history and criticism of its major events, movements and literature, indicates a move away from the broad acceptance of the Nordic propaganda and government policies that shaped the promotional strategies of the post-WWII period. Coincidentally, the increased international interest in the work of Scandinavian designers of this period has created a demand for their work that is being fuelled by astute collectors, major auction house sales, acquisitions by museums and writers of 'Scandinavian style' anthologies and design guides. Several companies that originally produced these coveted objects are again manufacturing a number of them, along with important and influential earlier designs from the 1940s to the 1970s (particularly for furniture, textiles, metalware, glass and ceramics). Some of these are outsourcing production of these objects to factories far from Scandinavia, while other manufacturers are reproducing designs with the original designers' permission or that of deceased designers' estates. Scandinavian design commentators, designers and design organisations are increasingly expressing concern that the promotion and marketing of such historical Scandinavian design—now promoted as 'classics'—is stifling new development and diluting the innovation and creative energy that created the region's design leadership in the first place.

A recent publication on Scandinavian design, and the most relevant to the subjects developed in this thesis, is *Scandinavian design beyond the myth: Fifty years of design from the Nordic countries*, a critical analysis by several Scandinavian and British writers on the construction and propagation of the idea of 'Scandinavian design'.¹⁴ The collection of essays reflects the current state of critical analysis of the phenomenon of 'Scandinavian design' by both Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian writers, theoreticians and curators in the field of decorative arts and design. The use of the

¹⁴ W Halén & K Wickman (eds), *Scandinavian design beyond the myth: Fifty years of design from the Nordic countries*, Arvinius Förlag/Form Förlag, Stockholm, 2003.

promotional exhibition as a way to reflect nationalism and cultural difference, while simultaneously developing opportunity for market penetration, is a theme addressed by a number of the contributors to the publication. However, of all the major international promotional exhibitions of Scandinavian design during the period from 1950 to 1970 that were examined in depth by these writers, only the Australian *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition of 1968 was excluded from analysis. The extensive analysis of this exhibition in this thesis addresses that lack of research. This result of this study is presented as a new contribution to knowledge about this event's impact on the development of craft and design in Australia and to add to the wider discourse about Scandinavian design's influences beyond the Nordic world.

In a lecture at the Embassy of Finland in Canberra in 2003, the Finnish writer and design historian, Anne Stenros, discussed what she saw were the essential qualities of Finnish design. As a framework for her presentation, she drew upon *Six memos for the next millennium*, the published Harvard lectures by the Italian writer and philosopher, Italo Calvino, and asked her audience to consider Scandinavian design in the context of his lecture themes of Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility, Multiplicity and Consistency.¹⁵ Calvino, and Stenros, positioned these themes as a construct for the future, but examining the reception to Scandinavian-designed objects in Australia shows that many Australians have readily responded to such qualities and found more similarities than differences between a Scandinavian and an Australian approach to design and problem solving. From Australians' first exposure to imported Swedish glass in the 1920s to their embrace of products such as Finnish textiles in the 1960s and Danish silver in the 1980s, the positive reaction to the consistency and exactitude of Scandinavian design has shown a willingness to apply a critical framework to the design of objects. Visibility and multiplicity have given Scandinavia's imaginatively designed objects a currency and accessibility to individual experience that is quite different from that of other cultural narratives such as film, music, painting or publishing. This thesis has been developed to show how everyday objects, designed and promoted by passionate and visionary people and rich with the intimacy of small and nuanced design gestures, can transcend the ordinary and become active agents in the positive transformation of our working and living environments.

¹⁵ Calvino's work, and Anne Stenros' and others' interpretations of it, was the subject of a colloquium, *Design in the new millennium: A colloquium on Italo Calvino's Six memos for the next millennium*. The proceedings were summarised and introduced by Ulf Beckman in Halén & Wickman op. cit., pp. 143–151.

Part One

The way to make us envious: The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition 1968

Lesson from Europe
Vikings in the Bauhaus
Fantasy mixed with function
The arts of ambience
Intriguing sobriety
Beautiful articles designed for everyday use
Pace makers in practical elegance
Accent – calm, cool and clean as jagged ice
Scandinavian naturalness
Scandinavian art is functional, aesthetic
Beauty on the kitchen shelf
Designs to live with
Scandinavia in the home
Distinguishing between art and artifice
Awareness of design
Emphasis on Nordic craft
The skills of Scandinavia
Norwegian style is rugged, beautiful
Fashion's enemy; or design genius
She has built a career on design
Works on design of everything
Finds expression in design
Artistic design of Scandinavia
Jar beauty
Four years of work
Glowing glass shaped into art
Scandinavia's 'pots and pans' exhibition
Girl who has everything
An eye for beauty
Modern image
Craftsman's art
Have exhibition, will travel
The hallmark is good design
He chose quality
Exhibiting design takes many skills
The way to make us envious

Every phrase listed above was published in the Australian press during 1968, as headlines for articles on the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, which toured in Australia from 15 February 1968 to 5 January 1969. While this is a randomly organised selection, its strangely poetic connections demonstrate the rhetoric and tone of receptiveness that greeted this event and the values that were ascribed to the applied art and design of countries so distant from Australia.¹⁶

¹⁶ See Appendix 1 for a chronological bibliographic listing of these articles.

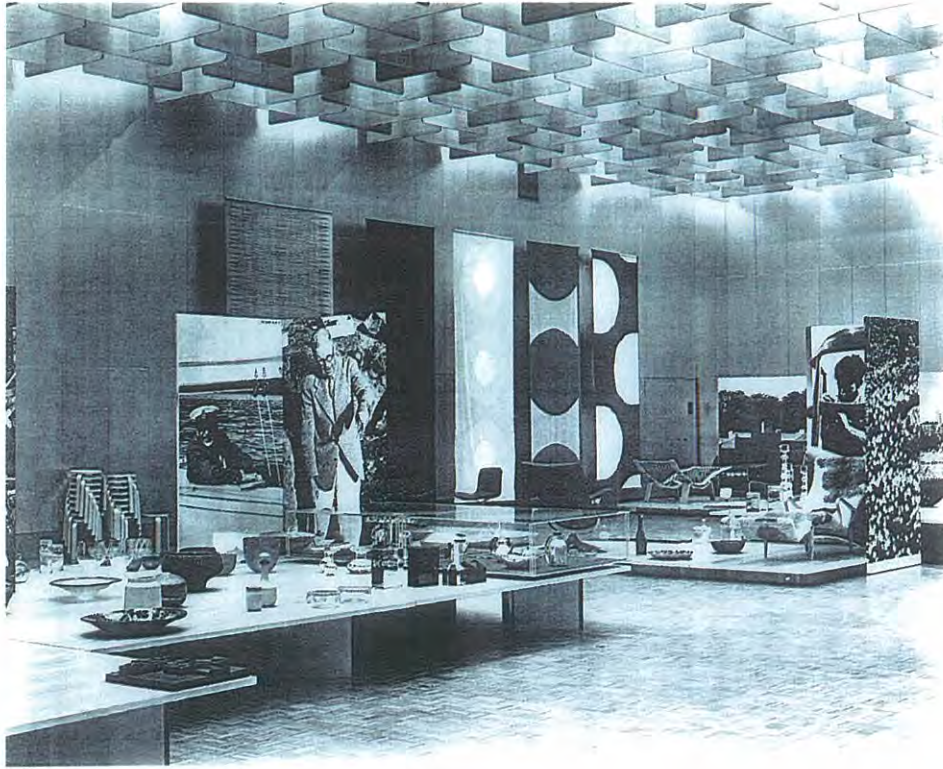


Fig. 2
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, 1968

This section will show how the exhibition developed from the ideas of several impassioned individuals to a fully-fledged international project involving the partnership and cooperation of major arts organisations from five countries. Using documentation from the exhibition's records in a number of institutional and private archives, I have reconstructed its developmental stages and examined the relationships between its key agents as they shaped it as an instrument of persuasion.

The exhibition, together with the State art galleries that presented it, positioned the subjects of design and crafts in the cultural framework of art museums and the visual arts, and was a pivotal event in broadening its audience's understanding and appreciation of the subject. Its organisers drew upon the advice and experience of individuals from a formidable field of expertise in design and the crafts, linking them through the project with those steering Australia's nascent design and contemporary craft movements. By incorporating the visual language of retail culture with the traditional experience of looking at art, the museums staging the exhibition stimulated dialogues about the role of craft and design practice, and the part it could play in defining contemporary material culture.

Design in Scandinavia was the largest and most significant exhibition of Scandinavian-designed products ever to have been shown in Australia. It was the result of determined effort over a period of six years by design promotion organisations, diplomats and trade representatives from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland and by the directors, boards and senior curatorial and exhibition staff of Australia's state art galleries. These parties, from opposite sides of the world and unknown to each other at the outset of the project, became united in their ambition to bring to an Australian audience an exhibition that would have the potential to improve the understanding and appreciation of design and its role as an accessible form of the visual arts. The persuasiveness of this exhibition and the individual objects that comprised it demonstrated the design argument outlined by Buchanan, who suggests:

...that the designer, instead of simply making an object or thing, is actually creating a persuasive argument that comes to life whenever a user considers or uses a product as a means to some end.¹⁷

As a narrative of things, rather than of words, the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was an astute and subtle example of persuasive intent. Its organisation of diverse arts and crafts resulted in a designed 'environment' constructed from a thousand objects, created and assembled from a Scandinavian perspective specifically for our cultural context. As a proven exemplar, it was cordially invited to demonstrate its design superiority in Australia's 'temples' of visual art.

Persuasion was the exhibition's unwavering rationale. The agreement of organisers and receivers can be analysed as a design argument based on three elements: technological reasoning, or *logos*; the character of objects, or *ethos*; and their emotional qualities, or *pathos*. Its visual rhetoric aimed to affect interaction in both rational and emotional ways, and to stimulate effective communication by addressing an audience's responsive capacities and the eagerness of visitors to consider their needs and aspirations within the narrative of objects presented to them.¹⁸ A semiotic reading of the exhibition, in particular its use of evocative photographic imagery as a parallel visual narrative to the displayed objects, shows how its design contributed to its success in what Buchanan

¹⁷ Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 97–98.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

refers to as a ‘mediating agency of influence between designers and their intended audience.’¹⁹

Examining the *Design in Scandinavia* as rhetorical strategy, we can see its effectiveness as a persuasive device to create a positive reception for contemporary Scandinavian design in Australia. We approach objects, no matter how far they are removed from our expectations of function or design, with a prior implicit knowledge of their material characteristics. Through our everyday experience, we understand, for example, what a chair is for, how glass and silver feel to the touch, how textiles drape and fold, how cutlery functions in the hand, how wood grows and can be worked, or what function a tool or an appliance is expected to perform. In this sense, we are already engaged with an object before being challenged by a different interpretation of its form or function. Through the experiences of use and touch, we also develop an understanding of the tactile nature of objects and the spatial relationships between them, and something of the aesthetic and functional meaning each can have in relation to others when assembled into groups.

This tacit language of objects, communicating to us through their design and materials how they should be used, pervades the best of both vernacular and industrial design. A Swedish term to describe this would be *vältalighet*, meaning eloquence, but also, in Swedish, rhetoric.

The success of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and its predecessors derived from the way that its curators and designers abstracted these physical qualities and relationships in the orchestration of a new type of constructed interior ‘landscape’ in which to encounter functional and decorative objects and to reassess their formal and material values within the cultural framework of the art museum. The objects thus presented in these exhibitions, and in the retail and trade displays that were influenced by them, engendered admiration and desire amongst viewers, a powerful combination further intensified through the planned supply and careful manipulation of media images, advertising copy and information about designers and companies by plausible and articulate spokespeople.

¹⁹ Buchanan, op. cit., p. 91.

Design in Scandinavia was organised as an Australian/Scandinavian partnership by the Australian Galleries Directors' Conference (AGDC), representing the Western Australian Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Queensland Art Gallery, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; the David Jones Art Gallery in Adelaide and the Australian National University in Canberra. Following a lengthy period of negotiations, the Directors of these State galleries, with support from the Commonwealth of Australia, entered into an agreement to stage the exhibition in Australia with the Swedish Society for Industrial Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*), as the coordinating organisation representing the four Scandinavian societies for craft and industrial design: the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (*Landsforeningen Dansk Kunsthåndværk*), the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design (in Finnish: *Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistys*; in Swedish: *Konstflitföreningen i Finland*), and the Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (*Landsforbundet Norsk Brukskunst*).

The Swedish Society for Industrial Design employed the exhibition's Secretary General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg and the Finnish architect and exhibition designer, Antti Nurmesniemi, as well as commissioning the services of the members of the selection committee for the exhibition content. The exhibition was presented under the patronage of the Governor General of Australia, Lord Casey; King Frederik IX of Denmark; King Olaf V of Norway; King Gustav VI of Sweden and Urho Kekkonen, President of Finland.

The Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Chairman of the AGDC, Hal Missingham,²⁰ summed up the aspirations of the organisers in his introduction to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition catalogue:

Early negotiations were begun in 1963 ... where it was agreed that an exhibition showing the artistic work of the four Scandinavian countries would be most welcome. ... The Australian Galleries some time ago decided that they would exhibit not only the "fine arts" of painting and sculpture, but those parallel arts which by their acceptance in public use furthered the whole conception of the need for educating taste in the community in all its widest manifestations. We feel quite sure that this exhibition of the best products of arts, crafts, and industrial design of the Scandinavian countries will not

²⁰ Hal Missingham (1906–1994 Australia) was Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1946 to 1971.

only demonstrate their undoubted creative abilities but will materially help our own country to progress in these fields.²¹

This brief statement came at the end of an intense period of negotiations and lobbying by a number of parties to develop this exhibition from a concept to reality. It resulted from the positive reaction of several Australians in key arts positions to several previous international exhibitions of Scandinavian and Finnish design that had gained wide exposure in the United States of America, Italy and France from 1948 to 1960.²² These exhibitions had used applied arts, crafts and design as messengers of a particular Nordic interpretation of modernism, while also using them to convey cultural narrative at a time of growing international interest in the Scandinavian region in the post-WWII period. In exhibitions and museums, such a narrative role was predominantly the preserve of the fine arts. To devolve it to contemporary applied arts was a radical strategy—one which was absorbed by those Australian observers who would later be involved in presenting the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

²¹ H Missingham, 'Introduction', in Hård af Segerstad, op. cit. The initial agreement was between Eric Westbrook, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Henning Hergel, a former Consul-General for Denmark and Herman Olof Gummerus, Director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, who visited Australia in that year to meet the State Directors in Annual Conference in Perth, Western Australia.

²² These were the Scandinavian national exhibits at the Triennale di Milano (Milan Triennale) and the exhibitions, *Design in Scandinavia* (travelling in the USA and Canada from 1954 to 1957) and *Formes Scandinaves* (in Paris in 1959). Sweden was the only Scandinavian country that exhibited at the 1948 Triennale. It was joined by Denmark and Finland at the 1951 Triennale, and by Norway at the 1954 Triennale.

2. Precursors

The exhibition that set in train events that would lead to the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australia in 1968 was the Finnish exhibition at the 1951 *IX Triennale di Milano* (9th Milan Triennial, known generally as the ‘Triennale’) in Milan, Italy, then the world’s most prestigious and influential recurrent contemporary design exposition. The Finnish exhibition was organised by the Finnish Society of Craft and Design (*Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistys*), which was established in 1875 to administer the School of Applied Arts (which had been established in Helsinki in 1871) and to organise exhibitions to promote Finnish industry and products domestically and internationally.²³

Since its inception, the Society had worked with the Finnish Government to organise a number of exhibitions of Finnish architecture, design and applied art in Finland and abroad. There was critical acclaim for the design of Finland’s exhibitions at the Milan Triennale in 1933 and 1936, and for its highly publicised and lauded pavilion designed by the celebrated Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto, at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. This publicity had boosted Finland’s national image as a newly independent country with an active and innovative design culture, and led to high expectations for the country’s manufacturing sector and export potential.

Finland’s role, along with that of its Scandinavian neighbours, in the promotion of its national identity through participation in international exhibitions is detailed more fully in Part 2. It is briefly introduced here in order to contextualise the role of Herman Olof Gummerus (1909–1996), who, as the first Managing Director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design (from 1952 to 1975), played a pivotal role in the funding and presentation of the celebrated and award-winning Finnish exhibition at the 1951 Milan Triennale. Gummerus, the son of a Finnish Ambassador to Rome, Professor Herman Gummerus, had lived in Italy with his family during his father’s ambassadorship there in the 1920s, gaining a bachelor degree at the Lycée Chateaubriand in Rome in 1927. He went on to study journalism and art in Paris and New York, before eventually returning to Finland in 1936, where he became head of the international press office for the Helsinki Olympic Games (which was planned for 1940

²³ E Kruskopf, *Finnish design 1875–1975: 100 years of Finnish design*, The Otava Publishing Co., Helsinki, 1975, p. 10.

but, due to the outbreak of World War II, was not held until 1952). In 1947, he became Head of Public Relations at Wärtsilä-Arabia and Wärtsilä-Nuutajärvi (both factories owned by the powerful Finnish Wärtsilä manufacturing conglomerate: its production ranging from sanitary ware, domestic and industrial ceramics, glass and metal objects to heavy machinery and icebreakers). Gummerus' business experience from 1947 to 1952 had given him, and the Finnish designers he represented, an entrée to the highly competitive European market for modern design. Urbane and multilingual, he used his diplomatic and cultural connections, and his Italian language skills, to successfully negotiate the Finnish participation (and the favourable positioning of its exhibition within the fair) in the 1951 Milan Triennale, later becoming a member of its international jury in 1954, 1957 and 1960.²⁴

The triumph of Finland's Milan presentation in 1951 provided Gummerus with a platform from which to launch a more ambitious project: a travelling exhibition of Scandinavian design to be presented in twenty-four museums in the United States of America and Canada over a three-year period from 1954 to 1957.

The North American exhibition established a successful model for the third *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, designed specifically for, and unique to, Australia.²⁵ As a story of personal connections, opportunism and publicity, it bears some examination in order to appreciate the crucial role that Gummerus and his Australian collaborators played in bringing about the Australian exhibition and in achieving his ambitions to bring Finnish and Scandinavian products to prominence in a newly identified and under-developed market.²⁶

The idea to arrange an exhibition devoted to Scandinavian design for tour within North America followed from an unrealised project with similar aims, proposed by Edgar Kaufmann Jr, director of the design department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 1947.²⁷

²⁴ O Untracht, *Saara Hopea-Untracht: Life and work*, Oppi Untracht, Porvoo, 1988, pp. 164–168.

²⁵ The title, *Design in Scandinavia*, was used for both the 1954 North American and 1968 Australian exhibitions, while *Formes Scandinaves* was used for the second similar exhibition in France in 1959.

²⁶ In a 10 May 1963 letter to Raoul Baudish, Gummerus outlined his plans for a visit to Australia to scope a possible exhibition: 'At a recent meeting with my Danish, Norwegian and Swedish colleagues we decided to meet with the Swedish and Finnish diplomatic representatives to Australia, to have their views on the subject when they return this summer.' DISF/TK.

²⁷ The background to this project is discussed more fully in Part 2.

The proposal for what would become the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was made initially by Elizabeth Gordon, editor of the American magazine, *House Beautiful*, following her visit to the 9th Milan Triennale in 1951. There she met Gummerus and made the suggestion to him that the relationships in design she observed in Sweden, Denmark and Finland would make a good basis for an exhibition for North American audiences. Gummerus seized upon this suggestion and subsequently visited the United States to set about implementing an exhibition proposal, insisting that Norwegian design also be included in order to justify the ‘Scandinavian’ title and collaborative intention of such a project. Gordon introduced Gummerus to Leslie Cheek Jr, then the director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, and chairman of the American Association of Museum Directors (AAMD), and whose home Gordon had featured prominently in the June 1951 issue of *House Beautiful*. Following Cheek’s confirmation of his interest in supporting and promoting this project and with his assistance, Gummerus and Gordon worked with the American Federation of Arts to organise a North American tour to the museums of AAMD members for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.²⁸

With its wide readership, high aesthetic and production standards and popular appeal to a post-WWII generation of homemakers and consumers, *House Beautiful* was a highly effective instrument for the promotion of the exhibition, and for the subsequent success of Scandinavian-designed products in the American market. In 1954, Gordon continued an editorial theme praising Finnish design with an article, ‘Why the new Scandinavian show is important to America’,²⁹ in which she linked the naturalism and (apparent) simplicity of Scandinavian design to American craft traditions such as Shaker design, as well as to the growing appreciation of the natural environment.³⁰ The influence of the political environment of the period was not far beneath the surface of Gordon’s editorial policy for her journal.

²⁸ H Hawkins, ‘Finding a place in a new world order: Finland, America, and the “Design in Scandinavia” exhibition of 1954–57’, in M Aav & N Stritzler-Levine (eds), *Finnish modern design: Utopian ideals and everyday realities, 1930–1997*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998, p. 237.

²⁹ E Gordon, ‘Why the new Scandinavian show is important to America’, *House Beautiful*, February 1954.

³⁰ For example, the article, ‘The most beautiful object of 1951’, *House Beautiful*, January 1952, pp. 66–67, focused on Tapio Wirkkala’s now famous laminated wood ‘leaf’ platter, produced by the Finnish company, Soinne et Kni. Wirkkala designed the Finnish exhibition at the 1951 Milan Triennial, which Gordon also visited.

While the International Style of architecture had gained acceptance in the corporate sector by the early 1950s, its corresponding furnishing styles, deriving from the uncompromising *diktat* of the Bauhaus, found less favour among Americans fearing a return to totalitarianism in the Cold War climate of the period. In her research on the North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, the American design historian, Claire Selkurt, investigated Gordon's role in orchestrating this alignment of Scandinavian and American ideals:

As early as 1946, Gordon began her campaign against the International Style attacking 'the authoritarian sterility of the machines for living.' ... a series of articles published [in *House Beautiful*] in 1953 ... contended that the International Style was linked to totalitarianism, and alternative directions – notably Scandinavian Modern – [provided a way] to the democratic lifestyle that Americans were striving to preserve. ... ominous undertones appear in Gordon's [April 1953] article "The Threat to the Next America", published in 1953: 'For if we can be sold on accepting dictators in matters of taste and how our homes are to be ordered, our minds are certainly well prepared to accept dictators in other departments of life.'³¹

Gordon used the platform of her editorship to construct an audience for her rhetoric about the totalitarianism of the Bauhaus, while at the same time creating a market for her journal and the Scandinavian merchandise promoted in it through her articles and its advertisers.³² As an arbiter of taste for an increasingly affluent and aspiring middle class, *House Beautiful* commanded a wide American readership, but was not widely read in Australia in the early 1950s, except perhaps by those in the professional interior design field.³³

³¹ C Selkurt, 'Design for democracy: Scandinavian design in postwar America', Halén & Wickman, op. cit., pp. 61–62.

³² Buchanan, op. cit., discusses the construction of audiences for design by suggesting that '...rhetoric is an art of shaping society, changing the course of individuals and communities, and setting patterns for new action.', p. 93.

³³ Copies of *House Beautiful* from the 1950s are rarely found in Australian library journal collections or in second-hand bookshops, unlike more widely read American magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* (both of which ran occasional articles on aspects of design and provided readers with a view of contemporary American material culture through their advertising pages).

More likely to be seen and read in Australia, at least by those in professional architectural and design circles, was the American interior design journal *Interiors*.³⁴ Less concerned with matters of taste than with the subject of design as a remedial force in the raising of standards in housing and the workplace, its editorial policy also championed Scandinavian design in general and Finnish design in particular. It included articles from writers such as Edgar Kaufmann Jr, who had been the organiser of the Museum of Modern Art's influential *Good Design* exhibitions, held from 1950 to 1954 in New York. Kaufmann wrote a report on the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in the May 1954 issue of *Interiors*, illustrating it with dramatic photographs of a number of Scandinavian designers' works.

The photography itself suited the elegant and ascetic brand of modernism promoted by *Interiors* and proved to be a key factor in the visual presentation of Scandinavian design. The same style of photography was also used in the advertising in *Interiors*, by which a number of the designs included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition were introduced to the American market, in particular to the contract furnishings and interior design market for which *Interiors* was a showcase and industry journal. This highly graphic approach to the presentation of objects echoed the use of black and white photographic murals of Nordic landscapes in the exhibition itself. This use of photographic imagery was a dominant design motif and was to be repeated on an even larger scale in the later Australian exhibition by its Finnish designer, Antti Nurmesniemi.³⁵

The Italian architecture and design journal, *Domus*, was another source of information about overseas design developments for Australians, particularly those in professional design circles.³⁶ Its focus on European developments in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and its regular reportage of the *Triennale* in its publisher's city of Milan, brought Scandinavian design to its pages. Its coverage of the 1951 *Triennale* devoted twenty-nine pages to the Danish, Swedish and Finnish exhibits, giving an unusually wide exposure to the works in the exhibition.

³⁴ *Interiors* was available in Australia on subscription. The Perth retailer of Scandinavian-designed merchandise, David Foulkes Taylor, was a subscriber in the 1950s (David Foulkes Taylor Archive, Art Gallery of Western Australia).

³⁵ See a fuller discussion of Nurmesniemi's role in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Part 1:8.

³⁶ *Domus* was established in 1928 by Italian architect, Gio Ponti. Subscriber copies of the journal from 1954 can be found in Australian library collections.

The North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition travelled under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts in collaboration with the official craft and design associations of the four countries participating in the project. Objects by 240 designers were chosen by a Scandinavian committee of design professionals and displayed in a demountable and variable exhibition system designed by the Danish architect, Erik Herløw, later Professor of Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen from 1959–1979, who had won the Scandinavia-wide competition for the position. Of the selection committee of thirteen, three—Olof Gummerus, Anders Hostrup Pedersen (director of the *Landsforeningen Dansk Kunsthaandværk*) and his successor, Bent Salicath—were later involved in the similar selection and organisation process for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australia, bringing valuable experience and credentials to this later project.

The same methodology was used for the next major international pan-Scandinavian exhibition, *Formes Scandinaves*, which was held at the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* (Museum of Decorative Arts) in the Pavillon de Marsan at the Palais de Louvre in Paris from 7 November 1958 to 31 January 1959. The Finnish Society of Crafts and Design was the organising body for the project (on behalf of the other official design agencies from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland), with Olof Gummerus as the General Commissioner of the exhibition.³⁷ As with the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibitions, it was funded by the Scandinavian and host countries, following the North American exhibition in its general organisational strategies, selection and disposition of works.

The exhibition content focused on decorative arts and studio crafts rather than on industrial design, appealing to the French taste for *luxe* and elevating Scandinavian-designed products into the upper echelons of European luxury goods. In this case, however, the presentation relied upon a reductive and quietly sumptuous form of luxury, with objects and furnishings arranged in a number of Nordic-themed room sets and tableaux. This presentation method did much of the work for the viewer, unlike the later *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australia, where the audience was presented with multiple choices and viewpoints from which they could compose their own thematic relationships of objects.³⁸

³⁷ The *Formes Scandinaves* exhibition is discussed in detail by D Hagströmer, 'An "Experiment's" Indian summer: The *Formes Scandinaves* exhibition', in Halén & Wickman, op. cit., pp. 93–99.

³⁸ Å Huldt (ed.), *Formes Scandinaves*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1959.

These two exhibitions, and others staged under the individual and collective auspices and various permutations of Scandinavia's official national design organisations, gave shape to the idea and popularised the term, 'Scandinavian design' as a distinct style and methodology of design from the early 1950s to the late 1970s.³⁹ Commercial exhibitions were invariably staged to coincide with these formal, culturally driven projects designed for the non-commercial environment of museums, a strategy that allowed these projects to be seen in a broader context of trade and design. *Scandinavia at Table*, an exhibition organised by the Council of Industrial Design, was the first collaborative exhibition of contemporary applied arts to be held in conjunction with the design organisations of the Nordic countries and others from outside of Europe. Staged at the Tea Centre in London from 1 November to 8 December 1951, it was partnered with a commercial exhibition of the same type of products, *Scandinavian Design for Living*, held at Heal's department store in London. Kevin Davies, a researcher of Scandinavian design's impact in Britain, has asserted that 'Scandinavian design', the descriptive term for the collective aesthetic of the type of products shown in these exhibitions, derives from the extensive publicity for these projects.⁴⁰ Its adoption by Australians may have come via the Melbourne furnishings retailer, Bruce Anderson, who was working for Heal's in 1951, meeting the exhibition's organising committee member, Åke Huldt, head of the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design.⁴¹

Davies has suggested that '...the concept of Scandinavian design can be understood as something of a marketing ploy, and that the ideas that were generated about it as, in effect, a sales pitch.'⁴² Few commentators were unaware of this strategy and many were critical of it, feeling that museums were being used to validate trade objectives. In his assessment of this aspect of the North American tour of *Design in Scandinavia*, Harri Kalha discusses how some museums hosting the exhibition cooperated with the distributors of the objects that were commercially available, by listing outlets and gaining publicity through this marketing process.⁴³

³⁹ These included *Design in Scandinavia* (touring Australia, 1968); *Design in Scandinavia*, National Museum of Israel 1974; *Scandinavian Crafts*, National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo and National Museum of Modern Art Kyoto, 1978.

⁴⁰ K Davies, 'Marketing ploy or democratic ideal? On the mythology of Scandinavian design', in Halén & Wickman, op. cit., p. 103.

⁴¹ Bruce Anderson described this meeting in an interview with the author in Melbourne on 20 October 1998. For a more detailed discussion on Anderson's role in introducing Scandinavian-designed goods to Australia, see p. 181–185.

⁴² Davies, op. cit., p. 102.

⁴³ H Kalha, "'Just one of those things": The Design in Scandinavia exhibition 1954–57', in Halén & Wickman, op. cit., p. 72.

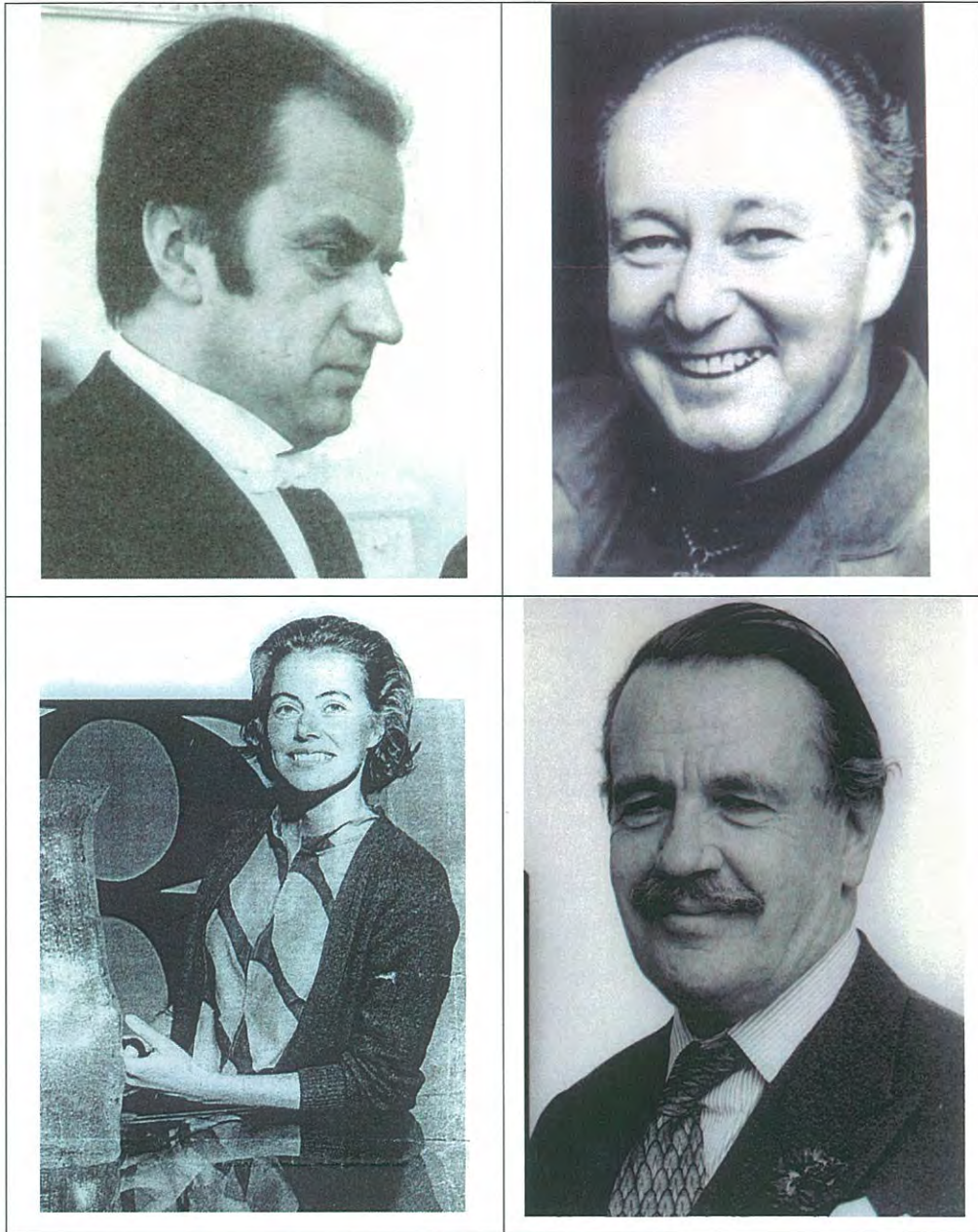
Other commercial exhibitions of Scandinavian-designed products gained the status of ‘cultural project’ through their museum and exposition-like presentations of goods for sale. An example of this was the large 1954 exhibition, *Scandinavian Design in Use*, staged by the Georg Jensen company in New York, on the occasion of the Brooklyn Museum’s showing of *Design in Scandinavia*. Georg Jensen’s authority in the field of design led it to stage numerous exhibitions of Scandinavian design, the most notable being the recurrent Lunning Prize for Nordic designers, which ran from 1951 to 1970.

Both *Design in Scandinavia* and *Formes Scandinaves* were outstanding successes in delivering and maintaining a new design paradigm to highly important markets for Scandinavian products, and opening avenues of communication on wider cultural matters between the host countries and those of Scandinavia. Edgar Kaufmann Jr, writing on the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in 1954, observed:

Some fifteen years ago, the United States – just emerging into wider awareness of modern design – became the willing victim of the art and skill of Scandinavia: for years anything up-to-date not ‘Bauhaus’ was ‘Swedish Modern’. Judging by the quality and variety of work now shown, a Scandinavian vogue will again flourish over here.⁴⁴

For those in Australia seeking ways to elevate the arts of design, it started to become an attractive possibility to assume a similar role of ‘willing victim’ of Scandinavia’s practised strategies of promotion.

⁴⁴ E Kaufmann Jr, ‘Scandinavian design in the USA’, *Interiors*, May 1954, p.108, as quoted in Selkurt, op. cit., p. 63.



Figs 3–6
Key figures in the development of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition:
(clockwise from top left) Antti Nurmesniemi, Raoul Baudish, Herman Olof Gummerus
and Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg

2. Agents of change: shaping an idea for the Australian context

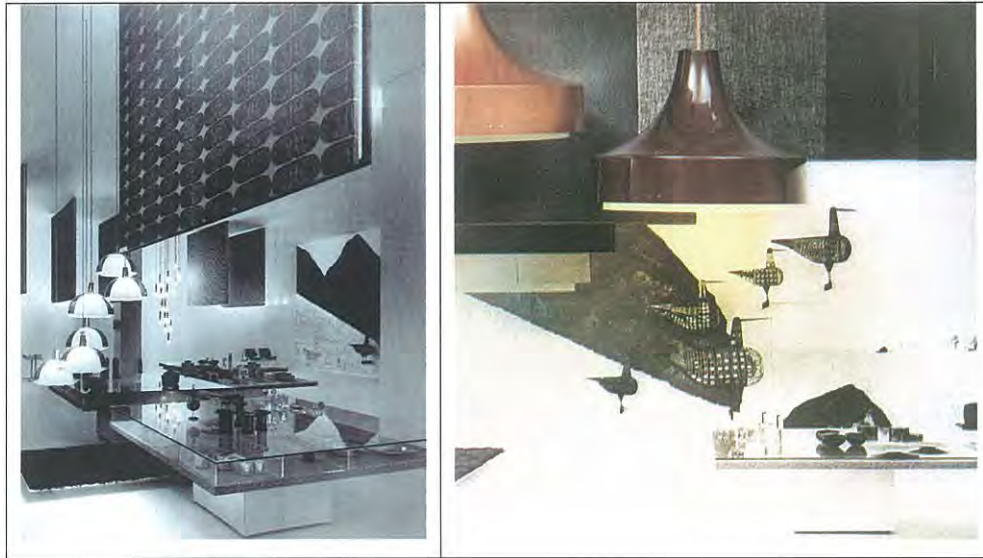
By the time that discussion began for an exhibition of Scandinavian design to be developed for Australia, its protagonists had had over twenty years experience in the promotion of Scandinavian design internationally, in some of the world's toughest, most aggressive and competitive markets.⁴⁵ For Australia, such a sophisticated and focused marketing push, driven from the prestigious locations of State cultural institutions (rather than from the usual trade sector), supported by the commercial sector and orchestrated by the highest levels of diplomacy, amounted to a 'cultural invasion' that would influence Australian attitudes to design for forty years.

The Finnish exhibit at the 1960 *XII Triennale di Milano* (12th Milan Triennale) was as lauded as its prize-winning predecessors had been in 1951, 1954 and 1957, attracting much media attention, as well as the Triennale's Grand Prix, for its design by Antti Nurmesniemi.⁴⁶ Australians, travelling in, and focused on Italy for the 1960 Rome Olympic Games, visited the Triennale in greater numbers than before, with design industry professionals gravitating to Finland's exhibition hall to see Nurmesniemi's Grand Prix-winning design. Among the Australian visitors enthused by the exhibition was Raoul Baudish, the director of the Sydney import company, Incorporated Agencies, who was later to become a key figure in the negotiations for the Australian *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The protagonists were not only official design organisations. The Swedish glass company Orrefors had exhibited internationally from the 1920s and was one of the first Scandinavian companies to successfully penetrate the Australian market for imported decorative glassware. See page 119 for an example of promotional activities.

⁴⁶ See Part 1:8 for a detailed account of Nurmesniemi's design for the Finnish exhibition at the 1960 Milan Triennale.

⁴⁷ Baudish was the director of Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, of 400 Kent St, Sydney. His company was the agent for Höganäs-Keramik AB, Sweden; Oy Wärtsilä Ab-Arabia ceramics, Finland; Metsovaara Oy fabrics, Finland; Oy Tampella Ab textiles, Finland and Oy Wärtsilä Ab-Helsinki Works metalware, Finland. See Part 1:4 for a detailed account of Baudish's role in the *Design in Scandinavia* project.



Figs 7–8
Finnish exhibition, 1960 Milan Triennale

While these large exhibitions provided the experience and the rationale for a pan-Scandinavian design event on a similar scale to be developed for showing in Australia, it was a smaller event that provided the trigger for this to occur. This event was *Finlandia*, the travelling exhibition of Finnish design, organised by the Finnish Society for Craft and Design for touring, in various versions and configurations, in Europe from 1961 to 1967. It travelled from Zurich to Amsterdam, London (staged at the Victoria & Albert Museum), Vienna, Madrid, Warsaw, Paris (staged at the Grand Palais), Lyngby (near Copenhagen) and a number of cities in both West and East Germany. Its installation, in a gymnasium, the *Stadion i Kongens*, in Lyngby in 1962, was designed by the Finnish designer, Timo Sarpaneva, and received wide acclaim for its reductive and sculptural presentation of a selection of contemporary objects by Finnish designers.⁴⁸

Sarpaneva (b.1926 Finland) has been at the forefront of design in Finland since his first works in the late 1940s and has been designing exhibitions since 1953. He remains well known as a designer for glass for the Finnish company, Iittala, and also designs objects in other materials for other Finnish manufacturers. Some of the exhibition objects themselves, however, were subjected to harsh criticism from the Danish press for their sculptural interpretation of function. One critic stated that ‘roughly speaking half the articles were useless for anything except exhibition purposes and photography’ and

⁴⁸ Kruskopf, ‘From stardom cult to new goals’, op. cit., p. 100.

hints that just this—that they photograph so well—might explain why so many pictures of Finnish exhibitions had appeared in the newspapers.⁴⁹



Fig. 9
Finlandia exhibition, Stadion i Kongens, Lyngby, Denmark, 1962

Because of the particularly successful disposition of Sarpaneva's design program in the *Stadion i Kongens* space, this particular installation of the *Finlandia* exhibition was the one which was illustrated in international design journals such as *Interiors* and the Italian publication *Domus*, becoming one of the period's most iconic images of modern Finnish design promotion. Certainly it was seen in such journals, then available in Australia, and may well have stimulated those Australians interested in design to endeavour to see it on their business visits or holidays to Europe.

One person who did see *Finlandia* at Lyngby was the Melbourne banker, Ian Mangan, who reported favourably on it to Gordon Thomson, then the Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, in 1962. It is not known if this was an unsolicited report or one commissioned by the NGV. Ian Mangan's background and his relationship with Thomson and the National Gallery of Victoria are not clear and no record of his report on *Finlandia* exists in the records of the NGV, indicating that the communication with Thomson may have been verbal and informal. However, after receiving this report, Thomson wrote to Olof Gummerus, by then the Director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, on 25 September 1962, expressing the NGV's interest in the

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 106.

Finlandia exhibition, presumably on the authority of the director of the NGV, Dr Eric Westbrook:

Mr. Ian Mangan of the Reserve Bank of Australia has told me of an exhibition 'Finlandia' which I understand is under your control. Mr. Mangan's description of the exhibition was so enthusiastic that I should like to enquire about the possibility that such a show could come to Australia. If there is any possibility I should be most grateful to have a catalogue and whatever information about the travelling costs that is available so that I can discuss it with the Directors of other galleries in Australia ...

In making his case, he went on to outline Australians' lack of opportunity to experience the design culture of Finland:

...Apart from very small quantities of Finnish glass and furniture which have an increasing demand here, we are not fortunate enough to see many examples of the crafts and design of your country and, since we know in what high regard they are held elsewhere, I should be most interested to hear of an exhibition which could be made available to us.⁵⁰

Gummerus' reply to Thomson, on 10 December 1962, the first record of communication from Scandinavia on what would become the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, gives a clear intention of the proposal:

... I am very glad to learn that Mr. Ian Mangan liked our exhibition in Copenhagen [Lyngby] and reported on it so favourably to you ... As you so kindly expressed an interest in the 'Finlandia' exhibition, I would like to ask you if you would consider a joint Scandinavian one instead, along the same lines as the one we presented in the U.S. ... As you probably know the Scandinavian Design Associations have a very close collaboration and we have for some time discussed the possibility of a common exhibition in Australia. Your letter gave me now the thought of putting this idea to you ... Needless to say, we in Scandinavia would be very happy to organise such an exhibition under your auspices perhaps in 1964. I would be very glad to have a first reaction to this proposition and hope that my suggestion will find your interest.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Letter from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition archive, Taidekorkeakoulujen Keskusarkisto, Helsinki (DISF/TK).

⁵¹ Gummerus also outlined the exhibition content, structure and costings: 'Such an exhibition, were it accepted, would require about 10,000-12,000 sq. feet floor space. It would comprise some 1000 exhibits plus necessary replacements and would consist of glass, ceramics, metal, jewellery, textiles, furniture,

With this proposal, Gummerus certainly could not have been clearer about his intentions and ambitions for the project. Whether they were as fully understood or as clear to his Scandinavian colleagues at the time seem doubtful, given the tone of subsequent correspondence between them on the matter, particularly about the cost of the project and the resource implications for their organisations. The progress on the matter was necessarily slow, in part because the proposal was dealt with as the normal course of exhibition business of the AGDC, which met face-to-face only annually, in meetings hosted by member State galleries in different cities. The AGDC was to spend the next three years in indecision on the project, before it was revived in 1965, driven by the energetic Hal Missingham, then Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Missingham's role in the development of the project is discussed later in this chapter.

Thomson responded to Gummerus' proposal on 22 January 1963, indicating that he thought that his proposal for a new version of the North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition would suit Australia. He stated that he had discussed the matter with Laurie Thomas, then the Director of the Queensland Art Gallery and Organising Chairman for the 1963 Conference of the AGDC, who indicated that there was no programming possibility for such an exhibition before 1964.⁵²

It is at this point in the long development of the exhibition that we begin to see the critical role of another person, Raoul Baudish. He maintained a long-running correspondence with Gummerus and acted as an 'offstage' intermediary between the museum directors in negotiations for the exhibition, and an unofficial champion of the project.⁵³ Baudish was born in Ceske Budejovice, Czechoslovakia in 1921 and died in Sydney, Australia in 2002. He left Czechoslovakia in 1947 to work for the International

lighting fixtures etc. In other words everything for the house. The total value would be roughly about Australian £30,000. From the Scandinavian side we would furnish tables, vitrines, podia and general lighting for the exhibition, and deliver the exhibition at our expense at an Australian port including also insurance. Detailed plans are furnished and the exhibition architect would come to Australia to supervise the installation. The inviting bodies would pay return freights to a Scandinavian port (the freights within Scandinavia at our expense); insurance during the sojourn and return; free exhibition hall and all maintenance costs; all help in mounting and dismantling, packing etc.; printing of poster and catalogue (for which we furnish material and lay-out), publicity etc. Should there be any entrance fees charged they revert to the inviting institutions as well as the income from the sale of the catalogues.' Letter from HO Gummerus to G Thomson, *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition file, Art Gallery of Western Australia (DISF/AGWA).

⁵² 22 January 1963 letter from Thomson to Gummerus. Gummerus sent copies to his design organisation colleagues, Bent Salicath, director of the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design; Aars and Hansson. DISF/TK.

⁵³ Letters sourced from the *Design in Scandinavia* archive at the Taidekorkeakoulujen Keskusarkisto reveal Gummerus' and Baudish's correspondence on this matter from 3 April 1963 to 7 October 1969.

Resettlement Organisation and the International Tracing Service in Germany, involved with the reunification of families displaced by World War II. He then migrated to Australia, arriving in 1950, and began work by selling baskets and leather goods for Henry H Rubens Pty Ltd in Sydney, before developing an importing business, under his own name, which focused on the supply of modern, European-designed goods for the domestic environment, an area of trade that he had identified as under-developed in Australia.⁵⁴

In 1956, he established his import business, Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, representing Finnish and German manufacturers of ceramics, metalware, cutlery and glass, later expanding his inventory to include products from Danish, Austrian, French, Norwegian and American manufacturers. Another Czech, George Kral, designed the company's showroom, at 400 Kent Street, Sydney. Baudish opened a Melbourne branch in 1945, commissioning designer, Ken Wragg, for its 'sensational' showrooms.⁵⁵ He sold Incorporated Agencies in 1975 and ceased any involvement in the company in 1977, but continued to import specialised Finnish products before establishing the contract tableware company, Connoisseur Collection, which he managed until his death.

In 1973, Baudish was awarded the Knighthood of the Finnish Lion (First Class) for his contribution to Finnish design and commerce in Australia. He was the founding member of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Australia and became its first President. His own home, designed in 1964 by Sydney architect, Ken Woolley, was a de facto gallery of modern Finnish design, decorated with objects by the Finnish designers (from companies such as Arabia, Iittala, Nuutajärvi-Notsjö and Marimekko) that he had befriended during his career as an importer.⁵⁶ His business dealings with Finnish companies and their designers led to contact with the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, and its director, Olof Gummerus, with whom Baudish was to maintain a long, cooperative and cordial business relationship and friendship.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Notes on Baudish's career by his son, Dominic Baudish, provided in an e-mail letter from him to the author on 22 February 2007.

⁵⁵ Alan Johnston, the owner of the Perth design store, Olssons, in a letter to the author in March 2007, described the showrooms as being '...sensational and the talk of the trade.'

⁵⁶ Details of the architecture and interior design of Baudish's new home were featured in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, n.d. May 1965.

⁵⁷ Dominic Baudish e-mail letter, *ibid*.

Baudish had visited the Milan Triennale in 1957 and again in 1960 where he had been greatly impressed by that year's Grand Prix-winning Finnish exhibition, designed by Antti Nurmesniemi.⁵⁸ His impressions of the exhibition, in which the Finnish contribution to the Triennale was strongly emphasised, were the subject of several articles for architectural journals such as *Architecture and Arts*, which he wrote on his return to Australia:

The special character of Finnish applied arts and utility ware, its inherent originality, simplicity and force can be explained by the Finnish environment. The long, dark winter and the short bright summer create a special rhythm of life where quiet meditation follows exuberant activity. This inspires creative joy and also encourages maturity when there is time for maturity; it eliminates much that is unnecessary, leaving behind that which is vital.⁵⁹

In his earlier article on the Triennale itself, for the March 1961 edition of *Architecture and Arts*, Baudish singles out Finland's exhibition as '...reflect[ing] the strength of Finnish creation, its courage, vision and creative joy.' The highly publicised image of the exhibition, showing Birger Kaipainen's ceramic bird sculptures in graphic foreground relief, was used for the journal's cover.⁶⁰

Olof Gummerus was the commissioner for this event and Baudish met him in Milan through the marketing director of the Arabia ceramic company, whose products, such as Kaipainen's birds, were an important part of the exhibition. From this developed a friendship between Baudish, Gummerus and Nurmesniemi that would shape itself into a team to support and facilitate the negotiations for the later *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australia. When Nurmesniemi visited Perth for the installation of the exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery, Baudish joined him before travelling together to each of the Australian venues participating in the exhibition's subsequent tour. This was an essential process for Nurmesniemi, who needed to see each venue in order to tailor his exhibition design to their particular spaces and dimensions. Baudish's role as a facilitator for Nurmesniemi's discussions gave him the opportunity to make himself known to each of the galleries' directors and staff.

⁵⁸ See discussion of Nurmesniemi's design of this exhibition on pages 83–87.

⁵⁹ R Baudish, 'Finland designs for modern living', *Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts*, May 1961, pp. 46–47.

⁶⁰ R Baudish, 'Awards at XIIth Triennale, Milan', *Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts*, March 1961, pp. 34–35.

Alerted by Gummerus to the possibility of an exhibition of Finnish design in Australia, similar in scope and style to the *Finlandia* exhibitions, Baudish took the initiative to visit Gordon Thomson at the National Gallery of Victoria in February 1963 to discuss the possible project. He wrote to Gummerus reporting on this meeting, with a separate letter on the same day with ‘a few lines of a more confidential nature’, noting:

... Mr Thomson would slightly favour an all Finnish Exhibition, because he is particularly impressed by the high standards and originality of present day Finnish design. I have not discussed any figures with him but feel that a contribution on Australia’s part of £10,000 (£8,000 sterling), for an Exhibition to tour all State Capital Cities, would not be out of reach.⁶¹

The participation costs from the Australian side had not been discussed up to this point, and it was not until 1966 that a budget was drawn up and approved. The role of Baudish as an Australian adviser and confidante to Gummerus proved to be crucial, not only for his advice on the Australian business and cultural scene, but also for his commentary and views on what he saw to be the weaknesses and strengths of the Australian Gallery Directors Council in their planning and promotion of the exhibition. As an importer of Finnish products, it was clearly in Baudish’s interests to ensure that the exhibition did go ahead, and under Gummerus’ stewardship with Finland as a key organiser of the exhibition, but his role as a mediator in the protracted negotiations for the exhibition went beyond commercial interests.

Baudish and Gummerus had begun discussions in early 1963 on strategies to link the proposed exhibition, whether it was to be entirely of Finnish products or a larger one focusing on design from all the Scandinavian countries, with promotions of Scandinavian products in department and specialty stores in each city where the exhibition would be staged. As early as July 1963, Baudish had taken the initiative of discussing the proposed exhibition with the newly appointed Finnish Chargé d’affaires, Olavi Wanne,⁶² and the Finnish Commercial Attaché, T. Tuohikorpi, later reporting to Gummerus their keen interest in the project and preparedness to support it to the Finnish Foreign Ministry.⁶³ Sensing a need for a coordinated approach to the matter of commercial ‘tie-ins’ (related trade and retail promotions) to the exhibition, Gummerus

⁶¹ 3 April 1963 letter from Baudish to Gummerus. DISF/TK.

⁶² Olavi Wanne was Chargé d’Affaires for Finland in Sydney and later in Canberra from 1963–1968.

⁶³ 26 July 1963 letter from Baudish to Gummerus, DISF/TK.

advised Baudish in late 1964 to request the Honorary Finnish Consul in Sydney, Thor Thorvaldson, to arrange this through a meeting between himself, his Swedish, Danish and Norwegian diplomatic representatives and the representatives of Scandinavian manufacturers '...so as to give it a Government touch.'⁶⁴

The exhibition proposal was discussed at the next annual meeting of the AGDC, held in Adelaide at the end of September 1963, after receiving correspondence from Bent Salicath, the director of the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (*Landsforeningen Dansk Kunsthåndværk*).⁶⁵ Following the meeting, AGDC member, Laurie Thomas, the director of the Queensland Art Gallery, wrote to Salicath:

The possibility of receiving a collection of Nordic craftsmanship and design for exhibition in the State art galleries of Australia was enthusiastically supported by my colleagues at their annual Conference in Adelaide late last month ... It was then agreed to proceed with negotiations through you and beg to let you know that all such negotiations from this end are now to be conducted through Mr Eric Westbrook, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria ... who will be in charge of the Australian itinerary for the proposed exhibition.⁶⁶

After receiving a copy of this correspondence with Salicath, from Gordon Thomson, Gummerus revealed, in a 16 October 1963 letter to Baudish, a failure of communication between the Scandinavian partners in the proposal. He stated that he was unaware of the new negotiations on the exhibition between the Danish representative (Salicath) and Westbrook, which had followed a meeting of the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian representatives in Stockholm in September 1963. Gummerus hinted that Salicath was attempting to take over the exhibition planning in order to favour Denmark. In a following letter to Baudish on 17 April 1964, Gummerus advised that if a joint Scandinavian exhibition were not to materialise, he would be prepared to visit Australia to promote a Finnish exhibition, as he had proposed from the outset, and to meet the AGDC to push for its support.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Letter from Gummerus to Baudish 28 December 1964. DISF/TK.

⁶⁵ 4 September 1963 letter, DISF/TK.

⁶⁶ Letter, 8 October 1963, DISF/TK.

⁶⁷ Letter, 17 April 1964, DISF/TK.

Correspondence between Gummerus and Baudish continued through 1964 and it is clear that Baudish played an important intermediary role in arranging for Gummerus to meet the AGDC and to steer the project forward with Finnish interests firmly at the forefront. In a letter of 25 August 1964, Gummerus described a meeting on the project between himself, Dag Widman (representing Sweden), Bent Salicath and Alf Bøe (representing Norway) on the previous day, at which concern was expressed that indecision on the Scandinavians' part might result in a loss of interest for the project from the Australian side. It was determined therefore to support Gummerus' visit (with his expenses covered by his organisation, *Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistys*) to Australia to meet the AGDC at its meeting in Perth, and go on to look at possible venues for the proposed exhibition in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

The newly appointed Honorary Finnish Consul, Thor Thorvaldson (who was also the managing director of the Norwegian shipping line, Wilhelm Wilhelmsen Agency, in Australia), hosted a welcome dinner for Gummerus in Sydney on 20 September 1964, where he was able to meet diplomatic representatives from each Scandinavian country.

Other guests included the Australian architect, Arthur Baldwinson (who was also a design writer); designers Douglas Annand, Gordon Andrews and Marion Hall Best; and the Danish architect Jørn Utzon (then resident in Sydney while working as the architect of the Sydney Opera House). Also present were the publisher of *Art in Australia*, Mervyn Horton; the architect, lecturer, design commentator and cartoonist/satirist, George Molnar; the importers of Scandinavian (mainly Finnish) products, Raoul Baudish and Russell Whitechurch; the head of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Talbot Duckmanton and the Deputy Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Tony Tuckson. The networking possibilities among this group were to be useful to Thorvaldson, Gummerus and Baudish in later negotiations for the exhibition.⁶⁸

At the AGDC conference in Perth on 25 September 1964, the State gallery directors discussed the project at length with Gummerus. The financial arrangements were discussed and agreed upon, although the director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Dr William Bryden, was less than enthusiastic about participating (mainly because of the possible financial risk for his small museum in participating in such an expensive project). Gummerus completed his visit and returned to Finland, writing

⁶⁸ The guest list was detailed in a letter from Baudish to Gummerus on 1 September 1964, DISF/TK.

again to Baudish on 17 November 1964 that he was pessimistic about the project going ahead because of the design organisations of Sweden and Norway possibly being unable to raise the funds for an exhibition in 1966 or 1967. Over the remaining months of 1964, Baudish and Gummerus maintained a regular dialogue on possible strategies for keeping the exhibition project alive, including Gummerus' suggestion that Thor Thorvaldson:

... be a moving force in calling together a meeting of agents and/or importers of Finnish design merchandise and that meeting would decide to appoint you [Baudish] and him as representatives in an All Scandinavian Agents and Importers Committee for Australia to plan together with department stores and other retailers the commercial activities around the exhibition, i.e. commercial tie-ins.⁶⁹

In a subsequent letter to Baudish, Gummerus suggests that, in addition to developing such a relationship with Thorvaldson, he also approach the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian Consuls in each state to put pressure on the gallery directors that were still undecided about the value of the exhibition to their programs. He stressed that '...much clever sleuthing is involved to find the right approaches [to obtain a commitment from the galleries].'⁷⁰

On 18 January 1965, Bryden advised Westbrook that the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery would not be taking part in the exhibition tour. This was followed by a letter from Robert Campbell, director of the Art Gallery of South Australia, that it too would not be part of the tour, following a decision by its Board, concerned with the high cost and that, according to Campbell, '...a good deal of similar work has already been seen in Adelaide.' This referred to the publicity garnered by '...one or two commercial exhibitions of Norwegian design under the title 'Norway Designs' [that] had been staged by Mr and Mrs Clare of Perth in one of the private galleries.'⁷¹ On 10 March 1965, Missingham wrote to Westbrook advising that the Art Gallery of New South Wales could not support a tour that, with so few remaining confirmed venues, was

⁶⁹ Letter from Gummerus to Baudish, 21 January 1965, DISF/TK.

⁷⁰ Letter from Gummerus to Baudish, 29 January 1965, DISF/TK.

⁷¹ From a letter from Baudish to Gummerus, 12 March 1965, referring to a conversation between the writer and Campbell. John Clare had established a Norway Designs franchise in Perth in 1966. DISF/TK.

likely to exceed the proposed budget. Without the necessary consolidated support from both the Australian and Scandinavian sides, the project lapsed.⁷²

In a letter from Thorvaldson to Gummerus on 8 March 1965, the writer informs him that Missingham had told him (during a private dinner at Thorvaldson's home) that he regretted that support for the exhibition was failing and that Westbrook would confirm this to the Scandinavian parties involved.⁷³ Westbrook did so, explaining to Gummerus that the participating galleries were unprepared to jeopardise their financial positions by underwriting an exhibition of such high cost. He concludes:

However, I must say now that in my view there is no justification for planning to proceed with the Australian tour, and I would suggest that you move on to your other commitments with perhaps the hope that sometime in the future it may be possible to do an exhibition here.⁷⁴

This decision appears to have been taken with some misgivings on Missingham's and Westbrook's part, evidenced by Missingham's letter to Westbrook in which he concludes:

It's a pity, as I feel that we really did commit ourselves with Mr. Gummerus and on his part he has done everything that we have asked of him, so that our professional standing in his eyes must suffer very much. I think we may best excuse ourselves by saying that our budgets and our Trustees would not allow it being carried out; but you will know how best to write our excuses.⁷⁵

Baudish wrote to Gummerus on 12 March 1965, detailing the numerous meetings and phone calls he had had with each of the State gallery directors in regards to the decision, and his suggestions for strategies that might help to reverse it. This correspondence is a clear indication of the crucial role that Baudish had played in orchestrating the negotiations for the project, and an example of his unflagging determination that it should proceed as planned. While a strong commercial imperative had driven Baudish's enthusiastic involvement with the project, his relationship with the State gallery

⁷² The sequential correspondence between the AGDC members has been compiled from the *Design in Scandinavia* file in the exhibition records of the Art Gallery of Western Australia (DIS/AGWA), and the archive of the Australian Galleries Directors' Council (AGDC) in the National Gallery of Australia.

⁷³ Letter, 8 March 1965, DISF/TK.

⁷⁴ Letter, 9 March 1965, DISF/TK.

⁷⁵ Letter, 10 March 1965, DISF/AGWA.

directors had clearly developed to a point where he was seen as a cultural agent as much as a businessman.⁷⁶

Prior to receiving Westbrook's letter, Gummerus had responded to Thorvaldson, saying that Baudish had called him to alert him to the project's diminishing prospects and that he was canvassing other ideas to keep some type of Scandinavian exhibition project viable, including a possible Danish-Finnish exhibition should Sweden and Norway not be able to participate. He informs Thorvaldson of this idea '...should you feel that you, at some time or other, would want to allay Mr Stenderup's [the Danish Vice-Consul in Sydney] illfounded suspicions for Finnish separatism.'⁷⁷

Clearly, Gummerus saw the pan-Scandinavian scope of the proposed exhibition as an important strategy for placing Finland (and his organisation) at the centre of planning, and for asserting Finland's position as part of a successful Scandinavian trading bloc. He suggested to Thorvaldson that the project be postponed until 1967 to allow for more time for the parties to come to an agreement on costs and concludes rather despairingly (but with a characteristic flourish):

From my point of view, I would be most regretful should my peripatetic journey – for me highly educational – but have resulted in a ripple at dusk in an unfathomable desert.⁷⁸

Shortly after this exchange, Thorvaldson wrote to Gummerus, to introduce his friends, Mrs Bowen Bryant and her daughter Mrs Peter Hall, who were planning to visit Finland to look at Finnish design, in particular the clothing and fabric firm of Marimekko.⁷⁹ Mrs Bryant was the cookery editor of the Australian magazine, *Women's Day*, and known professionally as Margaret Fulton, and Mrs Hall was Libby Hall, the wife of Sydney architect, Peter Hall, who was to take over the design of the Sydney Opera House after its architect, Jørn Utzon, left the project in 1966. Libby Hall had been

⁷⁶ Letter, 12 March 1965, DISF/TK.

⁷⁷ Letter from Gummerus to Thorvaldson, 13 March 1965. DISF/TK.

⁷⁸ Letter, 13 March 1965, pp. 2–3, DISF/TK.

⁷⁹ Letter, 15 April 1965, DISF/TK.

importing Finnish Printex furnishing fabrics into Australia since about 1960, adding a range of its Marimekko clothing line from about 1965.⁸⁰

The women's visit was coordinated from the Australian end by Raoul Baudish, who arranged visits for them, while they were in Helsinki from 23 May to 6 June 1965, to the Arabia ceramic factory, the Iittala glass showroom, the Finnish Design Center and the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design. Baudish had previously contacted the Design Center's Managing Director, Reino Routamo, asking if the Center would be prepared to host Fulton's visit at its expense, and covering her fare from London.⁸¹ The Center agreed to this and seems also to have been instrumental in arranging for Fulton, during the Helsinki-Hamburg leg of her trip, to visit the airline, Finnair, who 'will be very happy to show you their very modern kitchen facilities and brief you on the Finnish specialties they serve.'⁸² Fulton subsequently wrote several articles about her trip, and continued as an enthusiastic promoter of all things Finnish, particularly tableware and cookware. Many examples of these articles appeared as regular background objects in published photographs of her private and demonstration kitchens.⁸³ Most of these objects had been supplied through Baudish, with whom Fulton maintained a friendship. In this sense, Baudish's strategy to expose a prominent Australian journalist to Finnish design, at its source, was a success.

Although the abandonment of the exhibition by the Australian participants in the project must have been known at the time by Gummerus and its Finnish organisers, they nonetheless presented it to Bryant and Hall as a work that was well in progress (since Gummerus' January 1965 assessment of the planning schedule) in terms of design and concept. This was probably by having been made aware, no doubt by Baudish and Thorvaldson, of the women's connections and potential influence in the design scene in Australia.

⁸⁰ Marimekko was a specialist line of printed clothing produced by the Printex firm from 1951. It was established as a separate company in 1951 under the directorship of Armi Ratia, the wife of Printex's owner, Viljo Ratia. Vuokko Eskolin Nurmesniemi designed fabric patterns for the company from 1953.

⁸¹ Letter, 19 February 1965, DISF/TK.

⁸² Letter from Raoul Baudish to Margaret Fulton, 17 May 1965, DISF/TK.

⁸³ Fulton expressed her admiration for Finnish design, resulting from this exposure, in an informal conversation with the author at the National Museum of Australia in 2006. Speaking on 'Australian Autobiography', SBS radio, 3 October 1999, Fulton recalled that after the success of her first cookery book she had received a royalty cheque and used it to buy Scandinavian-designed objects for her home. She had seen the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in 1968 and was inspired by 'a bird with a clock embedded in it [by Finnish ceramicist, Birger Kaipiainen] as something to aspire to – beyond the ordinary.'

3. Resurrecting the project: new strategies

The abandonment of the project by the AGDC seems to have been a spur for further attempts on the part of Thorvaldson to re-generate Missingham's interest in the exhibition. Thorvaldson acted with the knowledge, no doubt resulting from being briefed by Gummerus, that a Finnish exhibition might eventuate as an alternative project if the desired joint Scandinavian one did not eventuate. He wrote to Gummerus on 7 June 1965, informing him that he had entertained Missingham at his home and learnt that he was about to travel to London on Art Gallery of New South Wales' business and suggested to Gummerus (with a measure of diplomacy, knowing of Gummerus' disappointment at Missingham's handling of the exhibition project to that time):

...I wonder whether you would like to invite him [Missingham] to visit Finland. I believe he has never been to Scandinavia ... I know that you are not very favourably disposed towards Hal, but we have to live with people as they are and not as we wish them to be, and a trip might soften him up and make him interested in Scandinavia. I find him quite good company. He likes his claret. How could he not like *ryijy* rugs, for instance? And they are easy to exhibit. I leave the thought with you. Hal might also like to meet his old friend, Mr Hergel.⁸⁴

In a subsequent letter to Gummerus, following his visit to Finland during a European trip, Thorvaldson again broaches this matter, reporting:

We had dinner with the Molnars [George Molnar, the Australian architect, architecture critic and satirist] in Turku [Finland], and he will approach Hal Missingham. I agree with you that it is a good idea for an Australian to put pressure on the Art Gallery [of New South Wales] to do something for Australia. Molnar gave us the good news that Alvor Alto [Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto] will give a series of lectures in Australia in 1967, and I agree with him that it would be an advantage to hold the exhibition at the same time... We now have to watch developments.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Letter, 7 June 1965. *Ryijy* rugs are the traditional long-pile knotted rugs of Finland, much valued in interior design. Henning Hergel had been the Danish Consul in Sydney. DISF/TK.

⁸⁵ Letter, 27 August 1965, DISF/TK.

This tenacious pursuit of Missingham and the persuasiveness of his Danish hosts bore results. On 30 November 1965, Missingham wrote to his AGDC colleagues advising:

While I was in Europe recently [Mr Bent Salicath, Director of] the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design invited me to Copenhagen to re-open talks [with Salicath and Anders Hostrup-Pedersen, then also the managing director of the Georg Jensen Silversmiths company] to see whether we could stage an exhibition in late 1967 into 1968 ... I visited a number of silver workshops, furniture design workshops, potteries and other design shops. I also saw annual exhibitions of various design societies. The standard of the material is extremely high and I feel strongly that we should do our best to re-organise the exhibition for Australia.

The purpose of this meeting was to re-open talks on the possibility of the proposed exhibition being staged in Australia in late 1967 or 1968. Gummerus also took part in this meeting and reported its result to Thorvaldson the following week. He noted that Missingham had stated that Westbrook, in his handling of the project, had lost the confidence of the other members of the AGDC and that this, along with their caution about the level of financial commitment they might have to bear, had resulted in their abandonment of the exhibition. Missingham, perhaps newly-enthused as a result of the persuasion of interested design professionals such as Molnar, had readily agreed to re-start the project under his control as Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and gave an assurance that the AGDC Directors would enter into the project with a new commitment under his leadership.

In Missingham's letter to his colleagues, he noted that 'at the meeting, Salicath had outlined a revised and more financially-detailed proposal based on the original proposal from Gummerus in 1962.' After outlining the proposal's costs to the AGDC members, Missingham went on:

The whole exhibition would be wonderfully designed and set up and would in itself be a first-rate example of the art of display. It should prove tremendously popular with the public, artists and designers generally, and it might well be that the Commonwealth Government could be interested in it from this angle. The matter has already been

before the [Art Gallery of] New South Wales Trustees who have agreed that I go ahead.⁸⁶

The AGDC members formally agreed to support the revived project as outlined by Missingham. On 21 January 1966, Missingham wrote to the Prime Minister's Department seeking financial support for the exhibition through the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board (CAAB). He was able to advise the AGDC in March 1966 that the CAAB was prepared to pay half of the costs of staging the exhibition, providing it did not exceed \$3,400.00 and toured to all Australian capital cities. It was later advised that the Art Gallery of South Australia would not be participating, but confirmed that the level of support would remain the same. This left the five participating galleries with costs of \$680.00 each. The Adelaide venue, David Jones department store Art Gallery, was not included in this budgeting.⁸⁷ The National Gallery of Victoria's new building, designed by Melbourne architect, Roy Grounds, was under construction and would be the newest venue for the exhibition when it reached there in October 1968. Despite Westbrook's earlier failure to secure the exhibition, the NGV enthusiastically committed to staging it, possibly under the influence of the prominent architect and critic, Robin Boyd, who had joined the Gallery's Board in 1965.⁸⁸

The final itinerary of the exhibition took it from western to eastern Australia over the period of one year, on the following schedule:

Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth: 15 February–10 March 1968

David Jones Art Gallery, Adelaide: 28 March–9 April 1968

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane: 9 May–10 June 1968

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney: 3 July–28 July 1968

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart: 22 August–15 September 1968

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne: 4 October–10 November 1968

Australian National University (Garran Hall), Canberra. Presented in conjunction with the Department of the Interior: 4 December 1968–5 January 1969

⁸⁶ Letter from Hal Missingham to Frank Norton, Director of the Western Australian Art Gallery, and copied to other state gallery directors, 30 November 1965, DISF/AGWA.

⁸⁷ Letter from Hal Missingham to AGDC directors, 22 March 1966, DISF/AGWA.

⁸⁸ In 1965 Robin Boyd was also a member of the Committees of the Industrial Design Council of Australia and the Museum of Modern Art and Design in Melbourne.

With the failure to secure the staging of the exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia, negotiations were subsequently held with the department store, David Jones, to present the exhibition in its sixth floor Art Gallery within its main Adelaide store in Rundle Street. David Jones mounted an intensive promotion of Scandinavian design for the exhibition, a program that was followed by its main Sydney store during the exhibition's later showing at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The roles of the Australian National University and the Department of the Interior in staging the exhibition at ANU's Garran Hall in Canberra played out somewhat independently of the AGDC. It had hoped to stage the exhibition in the new National Library of Australia under the auspices of the nascent Australian National Gallery, then without a building, but administered by an Interim Council since 23 August 1968. This venue did not eventuate, as the construction of the Library would not have been completed in time for the exhibition. The Albert Hall, then Canberra's only exhibition hall, was proposed but this was rejected by the organisers as being too small to display even half of the exhibition, and inappropriate as it did not have the cultural status of a museum, an unacceptable shortcoming for the ultimate showing of the exhibition in Australia's capital city. Focus then shifted to the Australian National University (ANU) as a possible location for the exhibition. In a letter to Emil Blytgen-Petersen, the Danish Ambassador in Sydney, Ross Hohnen, Registrar of the ANU, sums up a prior meeting with the diplomat:

... Firstly, it would be unthinkable that the exhibition of Scandinavian arts and crafts which, I understand, has the support of the Commonwealth Government, should not be shown in Canberra, or indeed that its size should be compressed, simply through difficulties of location. I am therefore willing to undertake to arrange for it to be shown adequately if the organising committee decides to send it here.⁸⁹

Blytgen-Petersen was a member of the exhibition's Committee of Honour and presumably recommended to the organisers that Hohnen's offer be accepted. The exhibition was eventually staged in the ANU's Garran Hall, a modern residential building with a dining and recreation area that was able to be cleared for the exhibition.

⁸⁹ Letter, 3 May 1967. The date of the initial meeting between Emil Blytgen-Petersen and Ross Hohnen is not known. DISF/TK.

4. Guards of honour, champions, curators and designers

By March 1967, with the itinerary resolved, the exhibition planning was well under way, being coordinated through the Swedish Society for Industrial Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*) by Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, the Scandinavian Executive Committee's Secretary-General. The Executive Committee comprised H Olof Gummerus, Director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design; Mårten Larsson, Director of the Swedish Society for Industrial Design; Bent Salicath, Director of the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design; and Jørgen Skaare, Director of the Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design. The Australian Executive Committee members were: Frank Norton, Director of the Western Australian Art Gallery; Robert Kidnie, Managing Director of David Jones' Art Gallery, Adelaide; James Wieneke, Director of the Queensland Art Gallery; Hal Missingham, Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales; Eric Westbrook, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria; and Dr William Bryden, Director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

A further group, nominated to emphasise the official nature of the exhibition, was its Committee of Honour. Largely symbolic in its purpose, with little direct intervention from its members in the exhibition development, the nomination of such an influential group ensuring support and validation for the project in both Scandinavia and Australia. The members of Committee were JGC Kevin, Australian Ambassador to Sweden; Gösta af Petersens, Swedish Ambassador to Australia; Emil Blytgen-Petersen, Danish Ambassador to Australia; Olavi Wanne, Finnish Chargé d'Affaires in Australia; Arnt-Jacob Jacobsen, Norwegian Consul-General in Sydney; JAB (Jock) Campbell, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Western Australian Art Gallery; Sir Leon Trout, President of the Board of Trustees of the Queensland Art Gallery; Erik Langker, President of the Board of Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales; NR Seddon, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria; and HW Miller, President of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.⁹⁰

On the Scandinavian side were Alf Bøe, President of the Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design; Baron Jonas Cedercruetz, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design; Anders Hostrup-Pedersen,

⁹⁰ 'Acknowledgements', Hård af Segerstad, *Design in Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden*, op.cit, n.p.

President of the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (and also Managing Director of Georg Jensen Sølvsmiede); and Rudolf Kalderén, President of the Swedish Society for Industrial Design. This system of committees had first been used to support the North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition project and continued as the structural model for the organisation of the Scandinavian collaborative exhibitions that followed.

Anders Hostrup-Pedersen visited Australia in April and May 1967 to meet with the State gallery directors on behalf of the Scandinavian committee to discuss issues relating to the exhibition organisation. Thor Thorvaldson's role in the project was formalised when he became the Honorary Secretary-General in Australia for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, further cementing Finland's leading role in the project. Thorvaldson (b.1906 Norway) had joined the Wilhelmsen shipping company (which had operated in Australia since 1895) in 1926. In 1930 he was sent to Australia to work in its Sydney office, where, in 1954, he was promoted to become its manager. He was appointed Honorary Consul-General for Finland in 1964, a role for which he was awarded the Finnish Knighthood First Class of the White Rose in 1970, in recognition of his service to Finland and for his role in the *Design in Scandinavia* project. He retired from the Wilhelmsen company in 1971 and still lives in Sydney.⁹¹

Ambassadors from the participating countries officiated at the opening events in each city, giving each of them a valuable, and seldom available, opportunity to raise the profile of their own countries' cultural and trade interests in each State through their meetings with their cultural and trade counterparts.

Margaret Fulton once again entered the picture when she visited Helsinki for a second time in April 1967, this time with Raoul Baudish, where they were shown preliminary plans for the exhibition by its designer, Antti Nurmesniemi, who had just been appointed as exhibition architect for the project. A press release about this event, issued by the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, which had organised it, indicated the importance given to the event and to Fulton's role in promoting Finnish design:

⁹¹ Notes on Thorvaldson's career from a letter from Lars Wensell, Norwegian Ambassador to Australia, to the author on 20 April 2007, with notes from his 'Speech on the occasion of Thor Thorvaldson's 100th birthday luncheon 18 February 2006, Sydney.'

... Mrs Fulton is a representant [sic] of a ladies' magazine with a large circulation, Woman's Daily [Woman's Day], from Sydney, and is also a manager of a school of household in her home town. The reason for her voyage to Scandinavia is to get acquainted with design and its representants [sic] for a series of articles. Before she had been to Finland in 1965 through the initiative of Australian importers of our products [Baudish]. That was because she was the first representant [sic] of the press who was seriously interested in our design and had made it known at her own initiative.⁹²

Other retailers, representatives and agents in Australia for Scandinavian products regularly visited each of the Scandinavian countries to source products directly from manufacturers, there being few trade fairs in Australia where this material could be evaluated. Established dealers, such as Sydney's Marion Hall Best, also played an ambassadorial and wider entrepreneurial role in the development of programs to promote Scandinavian products in a wider arena in Australia. Many of the touring exhibitions and promotional exhibitions originated through these connections. *Design in Scandinavia* was a case in point, with its Finnish representatives inviting agents Marion Hall Best, Merlin Cunliffe and Russell Whitechurch to Finland in June 1967 to discuss the exhibition before its tour and agree to act as willing promoters of its objectives on their return to Australia.⁹³ This was not considered an onerous task as each person would be retailing products that were to be included in the exhibition. The Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* of 16 June 1967 reported on their visit:

... As guests of the Finnish Association of Arts and Crafts they told about the demand for Finnish products in Australia ... These Australian businessmen now visiting Finland promised to take part in the Scandinavian campaign which will be actual [sic] in their cities in connexion with the exhibition. They considered that the chances of the campaign are promising...

The Association took the opportunity to seek feedback on the agents' experience in retailing Finnish products in Australia:

...[To t]he important question of prices they replied that the Australian prices for the Finnish design products were not exorbitant in comparison with many other European products. Many products as for instance furniture and clothes have to be included in luxury articles, because the import duty generally raises the prices by over 50%.

⁹² English language version of the press release, 25 May 1965, DISF/TK.

⁹³ See Part Two: 16 for discussion on Best's and Whitechurch's businesses.

Accordingly for instance furniture is favoured by a certain circle of customers: people who are really interested in design and people who wish to live up-to-date internationally.

The agents commented on a continual subject of discussion among importers of Scandinavian products in Australia: the vagarious nature of Australian import duties, leading to situations where textile imports were valued by weight rather than design and purpose:

...The import duty remains considerably lower in textiles, if they do not pass a certain relative weight limit. Finnish decoration textiles, as light cotton fabrics, have indeed started to be used even in large interiors. It is astonishing that the initiative in this respect has come from the state and municipal establishments and not from architects, says Mr Whitechurch. There are fairly many official buildings that have been decorated with Finnish textiles. In addition to the textiles also glassware and kitchen utensils are articles favoured by a large public.⁹⁴

As its Secretary-General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg was the constant figure in the planning and presentation of the exhibition, travelling with it for its entire Australian tour, after having initially travelled partially overland (via Kathmandu, Nepal) from Stockholm, to arrive in Perth on 29 January 1968. A Swedish-born graduate in Law from Uppsala University, she had been the assistant to the director of the Swedish Society for Industrial Design since 1960, working on design appraisals, copyright administration, arranging exhibitions and arranging study tours for visiting designers. Her organisational abilities, English language and diplomatic skills were of great benefit during her fourteen-month tour with the exhibition, particularly when dealing with the directors, boards and staff of five State galleries, a commercial gallery and an institutional gallery, all largely unfamiliar with the material on display in the exhibition.⁹⁵

As the spokesperson for the exhibition, Tarras-Wahlberg became the focus for the media, giving interviews in all cities where it was staged. Examined together, these reports are unusual for the period in that they are mainly focused on her professional

⁹⁴ *Helsingen Sanomat*, 16 June 1967, Helsinki, The Marion Hall Best Archive, Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

⁹⁵ J Bruce, 'She has built a career on design', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 17 July 1968, n.p.

work, rather than her personal life.⁹⁶ Her cultural authority as the official ‘face’ of the exhibition was animated through a strong degree of human agency in her interactions with museum and gallery staff, public officials, the media and the public. While officially connected with and responsible to her employer, the Swedish Society for Industrial Design, and through it to the exhibition’s Scandinavian Executive Committee, she was also well-versed and articulate in representing and communicating the historical and contemporary design cultures of all of the Scandinavian countries. She reinforced the exhibition’s message of a shared Nordic sensibility in matters of design through her many talks, official addresses, interviews and informal conversations with a wide cross-section of the Australian public.

Tarras-Wahlberg used her time in Australia productively, travelling by bus and train to distant parts of all states in the slower times between installations, openings and demounts of the exhibition. She kept a diary of all of her travel and lists of those she met officially and unofficially, revealing personal and professional connections made with an interesting cross-section of prominent figures in the Australian art, architecture, design and business world in 1968. Unlike today, when exhibition curators and organisers can make numerous short, strategic visits internationally for exhibition negotiations, installations and opening events, budgetary restraints meant that Tarras-Wahlberg did not return to Sweden during the exhibition tour and remained in Australia as its full-time secretary and ‘caretaker’. She acknowledges this role and the long, enforced separation from her homeland as a unique and formative experience, as it was for those many people who met and spent time with her while she was in Australia.⁹⁷

She also photographed the exhibition at each venue in 35mm colour slides. Her images showed visitors in the exhibition, as well as documenting related publicity such as advertising banners, posters and local department store windows displays of Scandinavian-designed products that had been mounted to support and capitalise on the exhibition. The high-level diplomatic connections surrounding the exhibition offered an important forum for Tarras-Wahlberg and those invited to its official events to discuss the situation of design in Australia and the benefits and implications of adopting the

⁹⁶ *ibid.*; ‘Women design for homes, industry’, *West Australian*, 3 February 1968; ‘Works on design of...everything!’, *Advertiser*, 21 March 1968; ‘Girl who has everything’, *Sunday Mirror*, 17 July 1968; K Mort, ‘Have exhibition, will travel’, *Sun*, 4 October 1968; ‘Scandinavian exhibits go on display’, *Age*, 4 October 1968; ‘Exhibiting design takes many skills’, *Canberra Times*, 4 December 1968, p.21;

⁹⁷ The author sighted this diary in discussions with Tarras-Wahlberg in Oslo on 8 November 1999 and again on 21 March 2004.

Scandinavian model to improve its prospects. As the only woman involved in the project's organisation and management, her authority in matters of design gave her unique status in a profession dominated at management level by men. She used the many works in the exhibition designed and made by women as examples of their achievements. In an article, 'Women design for homes, industry':

About half the industrial designers in the Scandinavian countries are women, according to Miss Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, assistant to the director of the Swedish Society for Industrial Design ... She said the work produced by Scandinavia's women designers was comparable to that done by men. Often it was impossible to tell whether a design was by a woman or a man ... Scandinavian women were aware of good design.⁹⁸

In four cities, the exhibition was officially opened by State Governors: Sir Douglas Kendrew in Perth; Sir Roden Cutler in Sydney; Sir Edmund Herring (Vice-Governor of Victoria) in Melbourne and Sir Stanley Bunbury in Hobart; while it was opened in Adelaide by the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Mr William Bridgland, and in Brisbane by the Lady Mayoress of Brisbane, Mrs Clem Jones. In Canberra, the exhibition was opened by Lady Maie Casey, the wife of its Australian Patron, the Governor General, Lord Casey. Lady Casey was well versed in design matters and had maintained a friendship since the 1920s with the designer, Fred Ward, who, as the Australian National University's staff designer, was highly active in design in Canberra and its promotion nationally.⁹⁹

In another example of the networking afforded by the exhibition, a photograph taken at the opening of the exhibition at Garran Hall in Canberra, shows Lady Casey discussing the design of a frypan with the Chairman of the Australia Council for the Arts, Dr Herbert (Nugget) Coombs, an advocate of craft and design reform and development in Australia.¹⁰⁰ Coombs was a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia and Chancellor of the Australian National University before becoming the first chair of the Australia Council for the Arts in 1968. He had also researched Swedish economic thinking and studied Sweden's recovery from the Depression.¹⁰¹ Few major cultural

⁹⁸ *op. cit.*

⁹⁹ J O'Callaghan, 'Fred Ward and life before Canberra' in M Bogle (ed.), *Designing Australia: Readings in the history of design*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 2002, p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Photographer unknown, DISF/TK.

¹⁰¹ This interest, and Coombs' role as the architect of Australia's postwar reconstruction, is discussed in E Jones, 'Nugget Coombs and his place in the postwar order', *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 1, July 2003, pp. 23–44.

events would have provided the opportunity for humble kitchenware to stimulate conversation, presumably centred on matters of design, between such people.



Fig.10

Dr HC Coombs (centre) and Lady Maie Casey at the opening of *Design in Scandinavia* at Garran Hall, Australian National University, 4 December 1968. The ceramic frypan being discussed is the 1955 *Terma* model designed by Stig Lindberg for the Swedish firm of Gustavsberg.

The Canberra presentation provided a further platform for Fred Ward and his ANU Design Unit colleagues to promote design profession and link the demonstrated Scandinavian achievements to the ambition for improving design in Australia, which was a key issue of the Industrial Design Institute of Australia, of which he had been a founding member in Canberra in 1958.¹⁰²

This final venue in Canberra was also a milestone for Tarras-Wahlberg who, through her professionalism, enthusiasm and shrewd advocacy, had succeeded in raising the consciousness of Scandinavian design across the country during 1968. At the opening, Lady Casey was dismayed to hear that Tarras-Wahlberg was being accommodated at Canberra's Kurrajong Hostel (a usual place for official visitors to stay), and immediately arranged for her to stay instead at 'the much more suitable' Government House during the remainder of her time in Canberra. This generous gesture reflected the respect that Tarras-Wahlberg had garnered from all quarters during her time in Australia

¹⁰² T Fry, *Design history Australia*, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, 1988, p. 46. The development of the ANU Design Unit (Section) is discussed in B Nash, 'Designing a university', *Design Australia*, June 1971, pp. 9–20.

and provided an elegant and comfortable conclusion to her sometimes gruelling and lonely, year-long tour.¹⁰³

Tarras-Wahlberg sent a written report on each showing of the exhibition back to the Scandinavian Executive Committee in Stockholm, noting the details of the official openings and guests and the number of visitors.¹⁰⁴ She also reported on the extent and nature of media reportage (measured in column millimetres for press and in minutes for radio and television), visits from official and commercial agencies, catalogue sales and lists of businesses in each city selling Scandinavian design.¹⁰⁵

During the tour, she arranged for the exhibition to be professionally photographed in each venue, in most cases contracting major photographers, including Max Dupain and George Mehes, to do the work.¹⁰⁶ These images were used to illustrate Tarras-Wahlberg's final report on the exhibition, along with montages of some of her own informal photos of the exhibition installation at the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Queensland Art Gallery. The commissioning of Dupain was an indication of the importance placed on the documentation of the exhibition and its representation back in Scandinavia. The reputation of Scandinavian exhibition design had been propagated internationally through the precise and dramatic installation photography of award-winning exhibitions published in major design journals such as *Interiors* and *Domus*. Dupain's and Mehes' photography would undoubtedly have furthered that reputation, yet these images seem to never have been published in such journals and have remained relatively unseen.

¹⁰³ The account of Tarras-Wahlberg's travel and meetings in Australia is taken from the author's interview with her in Oslo on 8 November 1999. The Norwegian design historian, Alf Bøe (who was later to become Tarras-Wahlberg's husband), had been the director of the Norwegian Design Centre during the 1960s. In this role he was directly involved in the *Design in Scandinavia* project as a content advisor, selector and member of its Committee of Honour. In discussion with the author on 8 November 1999, his views and recollections of the period, and this project, provided useful insights into the aims and development of the exhibition.

¹⁰⁴ DISF/TK.

¹⁰⁵ Total statistics listed in the exhibition final report (*Design in Scandinavia Australien 1968: Slutrapport om en nordisk konstindustriutställning*) included 1445 mm of press reports in 79 columns, 161.5 minutes of radio reportage, 108.5 minutes of television reportage, 4,795 catalogue sales, 204,200 visitors and 1,780 attendees at openings.

¹⁰⁶ The photography of the exhibition is discussed on p. 67.

5. Alternative radicalism

The drawn-out planning and organisation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition placed it in the Australian context at a time when the strength of its initial rationalisation had begun to wane in Scandinavia. It was the last of the major joint Scandinavian international exhibitions and the last to be structured entirely around the applied arts, the theme that had so spectacularly and successfully carried Scandinavian design to the world, and marketplace prominence in the 1950s. However, after fifteen years of success in international exhibitions, the rational image (but not the quality) of its craft and design-based manufacturing industries began to suffer in comparison with the more innovative, industrially produced designs and well-funded marketing approaches of their Italian manufacturers. These had begun to represent a new approach to design as a response to hypothetical problems, first widely postulated in the 1967 Montreal Expo and reaching a more definite point in the seminal 1972 exhibition, *Italy: The new domestic landscape*, held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.¹⁰⁷

The Italians' design ascendancy grew out of the country's developing petroleum industries of the 1960s and the subsequent availability of new plastics materials and technologies for experimental use by architects and designers. The Italian system of small production runs, with avant-garde objects being produced for large design firms by small, craft-based local industries, enabled manufacturers to bring advanced concepts quickly to the market, attracting enormous publicity for their technical audacity, colourful synthetic materials and sculptural forms. The sobriety, emphasis on natural materials and the minimalist quality of Scandinavian designers' work was eclipsed in the international marketplace by the innovative use of materials and exuberance of form characteristic of Italian products.¹⁰⁸

For instance, the Scandinavians' combined pavilion at the 1967 *Expo 67* in Montreal, Canada, had not lived up to the expectations created by its predecessors. It was criticised for its uniformity and for playing down the distinctiveness of each of the five participating countries that had so successfully asserted their independence (although still within a Scandinavian construct) at earlier international expositions and fairs.

¹⁰⁷ L Jackson, *The sixties*, Phaidon, London, 1998, pp. 173–175.

¹⁰⁸ While Italian design innovations were known and understood within the design and architecture sectors, the publicity surrounding their exposure in the exhibition, *Italy: The new domestic landscape*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1972, gave the movement a wide international currency and validation.

This was particularly noticeable at *Expo 67*, where ‘design’ itself was as much as subject of interest as the content of exhibits of numerous countries, including Australia, where Robin Boyd designed its highly lauded exhibit. His design centred on the casual arrangement within the exhibition hall of 240 ‘talking chairs’, designed by Melbourne designer, Grant Featherston.¹⁰⁹ These inviting and enveloping chairs, fitted with speakers narrowcasting stories of Australia by prominent Australians, and upholstered in Australian wool fabric, showed a strong debt to the work of Danish designer, Arne Jacobsen, in particular his celebrated *Egg* chair of 1958 (Model No 3316, produced by Fritz Hansen).¹¹⁰

Central to the success of the North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition of the mid-1950s and its later French version, *Formes Scandinaves*, was the idea that industry, and eventually the consumer, would benefit from the involvement of trained crafts practitioners and independent designers. Their role was to direct and work with teams of skilled artisans in the employ of companies, while undertaking creative research that could lead to the development of products for production that would exhibit the quality and exclusivity of the handmade, and thereby gain a market advantage. With the formal state sponsorship and promotion of this ideal by the combined Nordic design and craft organisations through their international exhibitions of the 1950s and 1960s, this model attracted design reformers and those who could see that a closer relationship between the arts and industry could deliver benefits to both sides.

1968 was a year of deep division in the design field, with a number of overlapping events that brought into question the nature of production, the resource implications in the use of natural and synthetic materials and whether the role of the designer should be defined as an agent of the ‘establishment’ or as an agent of change. For the design world, 1968 was a year in which the counter-culture made a strong impact, with student activism and protest in Europe, most notably manifested in the design world with the enforced closure by demonstrators of the Milan Triennale in 1968. The Triennale opened on 30 May 1968 and was closed a half-hour later by a group of demonstrators in a ‘sit-in’ that lasted ten days. Banners proclaiming ‘Workers, students and artists have occupied the Triennale’ were carried outside the exhibition venue, the Palazzo

¹⁰⁹ R Boyd, ‘Expo 67: A designer’s world’, *Design Australia*, 1/1967, pp. 22–25.

¹¹⁰ ‘Australia’s revolutionary talking chair at Expo ’67 is not only a superb piece of furniture, it’s an outstanding example of Australian manufacture—by Aristoc Industries...’: copy from Aristoc advertisement, *Design Australia*, no. 1, 1967, p. 5.

dell'Arte, and the slogans 'La Triennale è morta [The Triennale is dead]' and 'La Triennale è occupata [The Triennale is occupied]' were painted on the walls of the building.¹¹¹ The demonstrators contended that the Triennale's organisers were resistant to the idea that the activity of design could address social problems, rather than being solely focused on manufacturing and consumerism, with its negative environmental and social ramifications. The ground for such radicalisation of design had taken shape earlier in the 1960s and had begun to eclipse the unified and rational modernism that had served the Scandinavian countries so well in the previous decade.

By 1968, more Australians were participating in international dialogues about design and a greater number of consumers had increasing access to imported objects and furnishings from not only Scandinavian, but increasingly also from Italian, French, German, Japanese and American designers and manufacturers.¹¹² The ascendancy of Italian design, a phenomenon that had grown since the late 1950s, was a strengthening influence on a younger generation of designers trained in Australia in the mid-1960s, as Scandinavian design had been for designers a decade earlier. Design-focused retail stores were already selling Scandinavian and Italian designed objects and furniture side by side, but such stores were mainly catering to a limited and knowledgeable clientele of architects and design professionals and their circles.

As an example, the following illustration shows Greville's store in Melbourne in 1967, with a *Globe* chair displayed at left, sitting atop a more traditional Finnish *ryijy* rug.¹¹³ This radical chair (also known as the *Ball* chair and, in Finnish, as the *Pallo*) was designed in 1963 by the Finnish designer, Eero Aarnio, for the Asko company and was one of the first Scandinavian domestic objects to engage fully with the futuristic design themes of concurrent Italian production, eschewing any association with craft or Scandinavian design traditions. With its large and commanding sculptural form in bright-coloured fibreglass and its appeal to interior designers and fashion photographers

¹¹¹ K Kalin, 'Antti Nurmesniemi's starting points: the end of a golden age – the dawn of a new era' in M-L Bell (ed.), *Antti Nurmesniemi: to reflect and to design*, Helsinki City Art Museum, Helsinki, 1992, p. 30.

¹¹² Contemporary furniture, furnishing accessories and domestic products from these countries were available in specialty design stores Australian State capital cities by 1968. Such retail businesses included David Foukes Taylor and Norway Designs in Perth; Artes Studios, Scandinavia House, Marion Best, Finnish Importing Company, Finlandia and Georg Jensen in Sydney; Thesaurus, Danish Design Agency, Design 250, Forum, Greville's and Georg Jensen (within the George's department store) in Melbourne; The Design Centre in Adelaide; Studio 12 in Canberra, and Design Arts Centre in Brisbane.

¹¹³ Greville's was the agent for a number of Scandinavian-designed and manufactured articles, specialising in Danish furniture.

as an uncompromising symbol of modernism, it became one of the most widely seen Finnish objects of the period.¹¹⁴ Yet no example of it was included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, possibly because of its diversion from the exhibition's curatorial theme that underlined a Scandinavian doctrine of practicality, functionality and comfort. However, in its radical departure from these values, the *Globe* chair opened a pathway for Aarnio and other Finnish designers to assert a form of modernism free from the fetters of tradition, and later to use this freedom to gain a significant share of the international market for modern design.

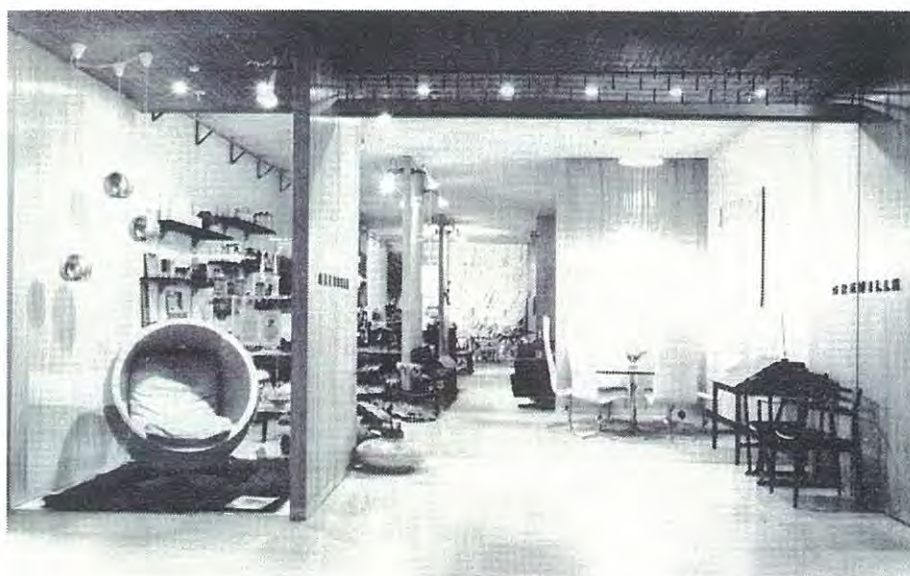


Fig.11
Greville's store in the Northlands Shopping Centre, Preston, Victoria, 1967. The store design was by Kel Grant of Formplan Design Group.

A wave of smaller Australian businesses specialising in more affordable Scandinavian products was not to peak until about 1972.¹¹⁵ However, by 1968, both of these retail

¹¹⁴ A *Globe* chair was part of the interior design of the 1967 Mary Quant fashion boutique in London, becoming synonymous with the fashion designer's reductive 'Mod' clothing designs of the 1960s.

¹¹⁵ As an example of the market acceptance of Scandinavian-designed goods in Australia, the Australian magazine, *Vogue Living*, devoted 24 pages to articles and advertising of Scandinavian-designed products in its 11 August to 9 November 1972 issue, under the cover heading of 'Scandinavia: The look, the life, the food, and how to get it here.' The businesses specialising in Scandinavian products advertising in this issue included: Creative Interiors, North Sydney, NSW; Danesc Importing, Pyrmont, NSW; Double Bay, NSW; Karelia, Paddington, NSW; Kidstuff, Paddington, NSW; Opus, Paddington, NSW; Romeo and Juliet, Brookvale, NSW; Skope Designs, Lane Cove, NSW; Tapner Jewellers, Gordon, NSW; Unicum, Middle Cove, NSW; Unika Design, Cremorne, NSW; Dean's, Design 250, Melbourne, Vic.; Décor Gifts, Camberwell, Vic.; Gillam-Quigley, South Yarra, Vic.; Kingsway Gifts, Glen Waverly, Vic.; Matchbox, Armadale, Vic.; Stuart's, South Yarra, Vic.; The Art Market, Beaumaris, Vic.; The Norway Shop, South Yarra, Vic.; Colonial Galleries, Fullarton, SA; Studio 12, Manuka, ACT; and Volvo Australia.

Vogue Living listed other suppliers and stockists of Scandinavian goods in this issue, including: Finlandia, Woollahra, NSW; Marion Best, Woollahra, NSW; Nordic Design, Crows Nest, NSW; Scandinavian Design, Chatswood, NSW; Suomi, Double Bay, NSW; Swedish Corner, Manly, NSW; Unicum, Middle Cove, NSW; Forum, Melbourne, Vic.; Georg Jensen, Melbourne, Vic. and Perth, WA; La Granja,

sectors were still in advance of the general public that was yet to have its first engagement with Scandinavian design in the legitimising cultural context of public art galleries. While the concept of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition as an exemplar of cooperative cultural narrative and restrained rationality in the applied arts had almost run its course in its originating countries, its relevance to the development of design in Australia was still appropriate and inspirational.

Toorak, Vic.; Patina Art, East St Kilda, Vic.; Studio 111, Heidelberg, Vic.; Craftsmans Market, Toowong, Qld; Ornamo, Hobart, Tas.; Design Centre, Adelaide, SA; Domus International, Adelaide, SA; Jim Brant, Nedlands, WA; Dansk Décor, Perth, WA; Norway Designs, Perth, WA; Olsson's, Perth, WA; Chez Louise, Darwin, NT; Centroswiss, Canberra, ACT; and Flair, Manuka, ACT.

6. Nordic summer: inaugurating the exhibition in Perth

The Art Gallery of New South Wales' director, Hal Missingham, on behalf of the participating State art galleries, through the AGDC, undertook the negotiations on the contracts, structure, content and schedule for the exhibition in Sydney. However, its inaugural staging in Perth at the Western Australian Art Gallery (now the Art Gallery of Western Australia) gave that institution a strong hand in determining the way it came together physically as an exhibition.

The Gallery's Director, Frank Norton, had been an enthusiastic supporter of the project from the beginning, scheduling the exhibition as the Gallery's major contribution to the 1968 Festival of Perth. His Deputy Director, Bertram Whittle, took the leading role in negotiations with Tarras-Wahlberg and the exhibition designer, Antti Nurmesniemi, on the practicalities of implementing the layout that Nurmesniemi had designed in Finland in the inadequate confines of the Gallery. Whittle, in consultation with Tarras-Wahlberg, made the selection of the twenty objects from the exhibition that was eventually purchased by the Gallery for its collection.¹¹⁶ He also arranged for the Gallery to purchase eight of the exhibition stands and several of the specially designed Perspex showcases from the exhibition after its closure, for use in future exhibits of the Gallery's own collection.¹¹⁷



Figs 12–13
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth, February 1968

¹¹⁶ These works were itemised in a letter from Bertram Whittle to Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg on 26 March 1968, confirming the Western Australian Art Gallery Board's purchase of the works, which had been recommended by Whittle, at its meeting on 14 March 1968. DISF/TK.

¹¹⁷ The Western Australian Art Gallery Board at its meeting on 14 March 1968 reserved these objects for purchase. See list of the works purchased in Appendix 3.

The exhibition's impact on the public perception of the Western Australian Art Gallery, and the subsequent influence of the project on the development of its collection and exhibition program was significant.¹¹⁸ As its staging in Perth inaugurated the exhibition's national tour, I have focused on this venue as a case study for the way that the exhibition was received in Australia.

The Western Australian Art Gallery had become an independent statutory authority in 1960, following its separation from the Western Australian Museum.¹¹⁹ It continued to occupy the dedicated two-story wing of the combined institution that was designed for the State's art collection in 1905, and 'modernised' these galleries on its organisational and corporate separation from the Museum in 1959. The modifications were internal and non-structural and did little to disguise the (by then unfashionable and unappreciated) eclectic splendour of the building's Free Classical and Arts and Crafts architecture and decorative detailing in both its Upper and Lower Galleries. Part of the refurbishment included the provision of a Scandinavian influenced visitor information and seating area within its Lower Gallery. It was furnished with a Norwegian Steinstad Snekkerverksted setting of six Biri pine armchairs and a coffee table, sourced from the Perth shop, Norway Designs, and a copy, made from 1959 by the Australian company Danish DeLuxe, of the Danish designer Hans Wegner's famous 1949 Round Chair.¹²⁰

Despite these cosmetic improvements, there was an obvious imperative for the Gallery to have its own dedicated building. This was not to be achieved until 1979, with the commissioning of the Gallery's new building, designed by Public Works Department architect, Charles Sierakowski. It opened in nearby Roe Street in 1979 as the major State Government contribution to Western Australia's Sesquicentennial Year celebrations.

The old Gallery's inadequate facilities, combined with continual under-funding of its operations, meant that it had few opportunities to mount exhibitions of its own and was dependent on travelling exhibitions to round out its international program, an aspiration

¹¹⁸ The influence of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition on the Art Gallery of Western Australia's collection policy is discussed in Part 3: 22.

¹¹⁹ The Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery was founded in 1895. A dedicated wing for the Art Gallery was designed by the Western Australian Government Architect, Hillson Beasley, and opened in 1905.

¹²⁰ This furniture was used in various staff offices after 1978 until it was transferred to the Art Gallery of Western Australia's permanent collection in 1987.

further hindered by the high costs of bringing national touring exhibitions to Perth from abroad or even from Australia's eastern states. As the cost of participation in the national tour of *Design in Scandinavia* was subsidised by the exhibition's Scandinavian organisers and partially funded by the Commonwealth Government, poorly funded galleries such as the Western Australian Art Gallery were able to mount such an ambitious and expansive exhibition, although still only by stretching their own budgets to the limit.¹²¹

The opportunity to stage *Design in Scandinavia* was timely and the exhibition provided a strong spur to the development of a new Gallery, for no other exhibition that had been previously shown at the Gallery so intensely highlighted the inadequacies of its building and facilities, particularly its lack of air-conditioning. The contrast between the refined modernism of the works and their display system and the dowdiness of the building was considered by many in Perth's design and architecture circles to be an acute embarrassment. It was brought to a head on the exhibition's opening night when guests sweltered from the day's 109-degree Fahrenheit heat while viewing objects celebrating a Nordic climate. Hal Missingham recalled officiating at the event:

The exhibition was opened at Perth, Western Australia, in February 1968 at a black-tie reception in a temperature of 109 degrees ... I tied a towel round my waist and another around my neck under my dress suit to soak up the sweat pouring off me, but Ulla [Tarras-Wahlberg] sat there quite unperturbed although she had just flown out from a Swedish winter.¹²²

Local critics were unanimous in their praise for the content of the exhibition, but also used its installation at the Western Australian Art Gallery as an opportunity to comment on the failings of Perth's cultural facilities:

This week's opening of the Scandinavian Exhibition at the WA Art Gallery blatantly revealed the vital shortcomings of Western Australia's culture when such a fine international display is revealed in a Royal-Showground setting. Lack of space, air-conditioning and acoustice [sic], among long, introductory speeches, combined to create a total disrespect for culture and international relationships. Cramped and crowded

¹²¹ The overall cost of the exhibition was \$32,258. Following a Commonwealth Treasury grant of \$14,070, the cost share of the Western Australian Art Gallery was \$2,842. (Australian Gallery Directors' Conference correspondence and minutes, NGA Research Library.)

¹²² Missingham, op. cit., p. 62.

display merchants have done their woeful best with 26 tons of Scandinavian design. No doubt, Perth people along with Festival visitors will attend and suffer in their thousands and continue to put up with this complete inadequacy. The time for complacency is finished.¹²³

Another reviewer continued this despairing tone of comparison:

A collection of Scandinavian design was opened last week in the impossible environment of the W.A. Art Gallery — hot, ancient, spaceless. The gallery is scheduled to be rebuilt in the 1970s. ... The professional exhibition of household furniture and utensils is, aesthetically, everything we expect in Nordic design. The nearest Australian equivalent would probable be a collection of plastic kitchen settings and folding aluminium garden chairs. But at least our goods are usually functional.¹²⁴

As the exhibition was the Gallery's major contribution to the 1968 Festival of Perth, its celebration of a particular European modernity became a focus for discussions on the Festival's content as a whole. The visual arts seldom received the promotional prominence given to the performing arts, which had been the Festival's focus since its inception, and the Gallery's entrepreneurial role in staging an exhibition of international stature brought its program into the wider discourse on cultural difference that characterised the Festival. The Festival's other offerings during the opening week of the exhibition included the film, *Persona*, a dark and astringent narrative by the Swedish director, Ingmar Bergman. Its monochromatic drama contrasted with another current film, *Il Deserto Rosso* (Red Desert), by the Italian director, Michelangelo Antonioni. Although this film also dealt with human frailty and alienation, in this case in the context of Italy's industrial wasteland, it did so through Antonioni's innovative and evocative use of saturated, acrid colour to suggest the toxic setting of the film. Also showing during the exhibition were Federico Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* and Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*, adding to the contemporary European flavour of the Festival.

The hermetic nature of the Festival of Perth (one of its enduring characteristics), with closely scheduled events attracting the same type of audience, built a curious linkage between seemingly dissimilar themes. For example, audiences arriving at *Design in*

¹²³ L Knott, 'Time for action not words', *Sunday Times*, Perth, 18 February 1968.

¹²⁴ D Graham, 'Perth Festival: Discrepancies', *Bulletin*, Sydney, 9 March 1968.

Scandinavia may have carried the melancholic resonances of Bergman's and Antonioni's films to their encounter with *Design in Scandinavia* and the distinctly Nordic colour orchestration and imagery of its exhibits.¹²⁵

A more predictable type of Scandinavian propaganda was the staple of the concurrent *Scandinavian Film Show* held for ten days at the West Australian Government Tourist Bureau Theatre, in Perth's city centre, as part of the Western Australian Art Gallery's public program for the exhibition. With documentaries ranging in scope from *Today's Vikings*, *Form for Function* and *Christmas in Sweden* to *D...for Design*, *Sauna* and *Tinny the Sardine*, the program offered Perth office workers some air-conditioned Nordic escapism during their stifling summer lunch breaks.

In the atmosphere of Perth's bleached mid-summer, a welcome sense of the 'other' pervaded the Festival, creating a culture of comparison that was to surround *Design in Scandinavia*. Also concurrently on view at Perth's Skinner Galleries was the *Oriental Exhibition*, an exhibition of rare Sung Dynasty Chinese and Korean ceramics and sixth century Thai and Khmer sculpture, paintings, lacquer, bronzes and ceramics.¹²⁶ With the front-page headline about the further deployment of 10,500 more American troops to Vietnam in the *West Australian* newspaper on the opening day of *Design in Scandinavia*, the *Oriental Exhibition* carried with it another, unintentionally ironic, sense of disconnectedness and otherness, adding to the escapist tone of the Festival.¹²⁷

The exhibition arrived in Fremantle from Sweden and Finland on the *M.S. Talabot* at the end of January 1968, with about 1,000 objects packed in 10 containers and weighing 22 tons, with a value on arrival of \$75,000. Grace Brothers was the company responsible for the exhibition's movements within Australia. Tarras-Wahlberg, arrived on 29 January 1968, followed on 5 February by Gummerus, Nurmesniemi, and his wife, the textile and fashion designer, Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi.¹²⁸ All were directly involved in the installation of the exhibition, working hands-on with the staff of the Western Australian Art Gallery under the supervision of its Deputy Director, Bert Whittle. The Gallery had not previously presented an exhibition of such design

¹²⁵ This view is informed by the author's own experience of these events.

¹²⁶ The Skinner Galleries, directed by Rose Skinner, who founded it in 1957, was Perth's premier private art gallery, occasionally showing contemporary craft and Scandinavian design as part of its program.

¹²⁷ *West Australian*, 15 February 1968.

¹²⁸ Confirmation of arrival dates from Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg to AGWA Director, Frank Norton, by letter of [n.d.] January 1968. DISF/AGWA.

precision and complexity, yet the display system was able to be quickly and efficiently assembled by the Gallery's art-handling staff (who were also its security guards), allowing Nurmesniemi time to refine the placements of each object in accordance with his plan. The system of assembly and disposition of works was to set the pattern for other venues and therefore the Perth installation was critical in refining details that Tarras-Wahlberg would later supervise on her own.



Fig.14
Vuokko Nurmesniemi assisting with the installation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, Western Australian Art Gallery

The Gallery held two 'Press Days' for the exhibition before its official opening at 8pm on Thursday 15 February 1968 by the Governor of Western Australia, Major-General Sir Douglas Kendrew. As the opening was large, with 500 guests viewing exhibits on the Gallery's two floors, arrangements had been made for the opening speeches to be relayed by closed-circuit television to several points in the Upper Gallery, the first time the Gallery employed such technology. The broadcast was organised by the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) with assistance from TVW Channel 7 in Perth. In his letter of thanks to Dr Hayden Williams, Director of WAIT, the Gallery's Director, Frank Norton, said of the broadcast: 'Perhaps a far more important aspect was

its demonstration to public and, I hope, Government of the possible use of T.V. in the new Art Gallery.’¹²⁹

Unusually for the Gallery (and for Perth), night openings to 10pm were offered on Wednesdays and Fridays during the exhibition, bringing something of the ambience of Scandinavian midsummer festivity to the event and animating an otherwise dull part of the city. For the opening event, a traditional Scandinavian smorgasbord was offered to guests, with specialty dishes from each Nordic country designated by miniature national flags. This was the first official public event in Perth to have had its catering presented in this style, and for many guests would have offered the first sight and taste of some of the traditional foods and flavours of the Scandinavian countries.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ DISF/AGWA

¹³⁰ In a letter of 27 November 1967, from Olof Gummerus to Thor Thorvaldson, the writer discusses the plans for the opening reception at the Western Australian Art Gallery in Perth: ‘... we thought it would be nice if we could offer our guests Scandinavian beverages and tid-bits such as Finnish Dry Vodka. Løtjens, Aalborgs, OP. Andersson, Tuborg or Carlsberg, Cherry Heering, Suomuurain, herrings, reindeer meat, etc.’ DISF/TK.

7. A landscape of objects: design and presentation

The design of the exhibition had been planned for each venue in advance of its arrival in Australia, from plans of each gallery sent by Hal Missingham's office to Gummerus and Nurmesniemi, in Helsinki.¹³¹ Nurmesniemi's use of modular display stands, screens and showcases meant that a variety of configurations could be accommodated in spaces of 8,000 to 12,000 square feet without compromising the ambience of the exhibition. The exhibition content was extensive enough to be able to be reduced in numbers of exhibited objects to suit the smaller venues on the tour, while retaining the variety and overall themes of the full installation.

Nurmesniemi's design of visually unattached screens and 'floating' platforms and display cases for groups of objects projected clear, simple and powerful imagery of Scandinavia and the Nordic world. These simple devices superimposed a constructed 'landscape of objects' on the gallery spaces (of all the venues for the exhibition tour), in an elegant and subtle obliteration of their stylistic variations and their spatial and design shortcomings. While this approach served to heighten the contrast between the exhibition and its location in a particular gallery, it also subverted the conventions of display within those Australian art museums by using the presentation techniques of commercial merchandising and trade exhibitions.

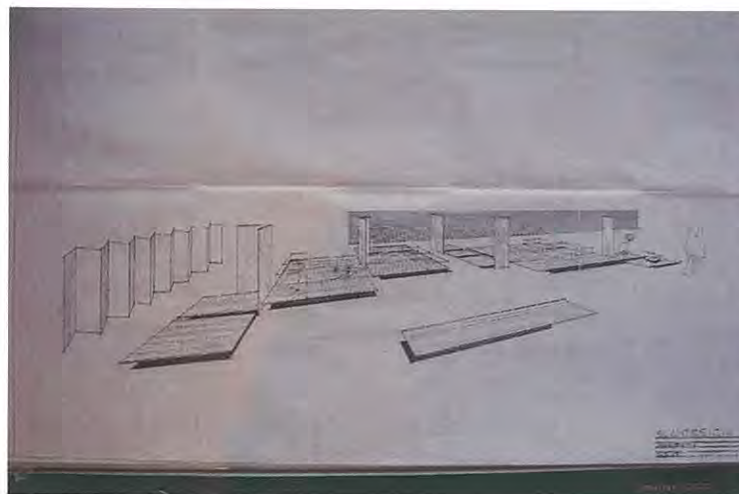


Fig.15
Antti Nurmesniemi's schematic drawing of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition¹³²

¹³¹ Art Gallery of New South Wales Director, Hal Missingham, sent plans and notes on the exhibition display system in a 17 April 1967 progress report to members of the AGDC participating in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition tour. DISF/AGWA.

¹³² Studio Nurmesniemi, Helsinki.

The modular exhibition display system consisted of clear-lacquered Baltic pine display platforms of uniform size. Each platform was 1200 mm wide and 2400 mm long, mounted on V-shaped legs of folded 2mm-thick aluminium sheet at heights of 200 mm, 400 mm and 600 mm. Clear Perspex showcases, each 1200 x 1200 mm, were placed on top of the platforms and elevated with small spacers, allowing the case and its contents to appear to ‘float’ above its stand. Their slotted end panels created the polished, crystalline effect of sheets of ice encapsulating the silver and steel jewellery within them. Vertical display panels, mounted with black and white photographs or hung with stretched lengths of printed and woven textiles, were arranged in freestanding groups or mounted along walls. All of the platforms, panels and showcases were designed and constructed to be precisely slotted together without the need of screws or carpentry, streamlining the installations and demounts within their short timeframes.¹³³

Although this approach to the arrangement of the exhibition showed a debt to the planar design program of the Dutch De Stijl movement of the 1920s, Nurmesniemi’s organisation stemmed from a deeper and instinctive understanding of space: a particular Finnish-ness that has been described by the Finnish architect and writer, Juhani Pallasmaa:

... the relations of man, artefacts and culture are complex. The difficulties of rationally conceiving these relations arise mainly because decisive interaction takes place on an unconscious biocultural level ... The psycho-linguistic studies of the Norwegian-born Finn, Frode Strømmes, have revealed astonishing differences in spatial imagery and use of space between Finnish and Swedish speaking people for instance, and these differences are no doubt reflected in Finnish and Swedish architecture ... We Finns tend to organise space topologically on the basis of an amorphous ‘forest geometry’ as opposed to the ‘geometry of form’ that guides European thinking.¹³⁴

The placement of the displayed objects on low stands suggested the natural and practical accessibility of objects in a domestic setting, in contrast to the more usual conventions of display of decorative arts objects in museums, in showcases more at the level of wall-mounted art works.

¹³³ The exhibition and lighting structures were made by Jalotyö Ky in Finland. The twenty-four photographic enlargements mounted on the screens were produced by the Finnish company, Helge Fagerlund and Wulff.

¹³⁴ J Pallasmaa, ‘Tradition and modernity’, in *AR 100: The recovery of the modern: Architectural Review 1980–1995: Key text and critique*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1996, pp. 134–135.

The design of the exhibition was arranged to allow the visitor to focus on three themes: *The Tradition of Design*, *Life Today: Man and Nature* and *Objects of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design Manufactured by Scandinavian Industry*. These themes were interpreted in a series of semicircular introductory screen panels mounted with photographic enlargements of ancient objects representing traditions of design from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, in front of which was displayed a modern object from each country. The design theme of image and object continued throughout the exhibition, its apparently random ‘forest geometry’ juxtaposing objects with large-scale dramatic black and white photographic enlargements of the natural Nordic environment, Scandinavians going about daily life and views of historic and contemporary urban spaces.



Fig.16
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, October 1968

No didactic texts were used in the exhibition but each group of objects was uniformly labelled with the name of the designer and manufacturer. Smaller objects such as jewellery, watches, knives, cutlery, boxes and smaller hollowware objects were displayed in the showcases; all other objects were placed on open display, following a

display convention seen in the previous exhibitions of such material. These even included highly valuable silver objects that, while imparting a sense of accessibility and openness, created a monitoring problem for security staff, unused to the open display of valuable small items in crowded exhibition spaces. Such accessibility also made subtle reference to an implied sense of social order in Scandinavian society, where theft of cultural property was (imagined to be) rare.

Provoking such comparisons with the conventions of display and public behaviour in Australia fuelled the culture of comparison and propagated the notion of Scandinavian social cohesion and order.¹³⁵ No figures are available in relation to thefts from the exhibition, but they were expected and potential damage and losses were factored into the exhibition planning, with replacements (of what were production objects) being supplied.¹³⁶ The most valuable item in the exhibition, a Georg Jensen sterling silver pitcher designed in 1952 by Henning Koppel, with a value (in 1968) of \$1,200, was nonetheless placed on open display at every venue, and was subsequently acquired by the Western Australian Art Gallery.

The selection of the exhibits was made by the members of the Scandinavian Executive Committee, in conjunction with the exhibition designer Antti Nurmesniemi, following visits to artists, studios, workshops and factories across Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. Recognising that the exhibition was to be shown in the context of art museums in Australia, the selection focused on unique studio works and decorative arts objects made for limited or mass-production, rather than on industrial design for appliances, machinery or technical equipment (although a small selection of lighting fixtures, cameras and hi-fi equipment was included). This was a timely decision in relation to the burgeoning contemporary crafts movement in Australia, with the exhibition stimulating wide discussion within the emergent professional craft and design sectors in each city.¹³⁷ It also focused attention on the role of design education and the training of designers and crafts practitioners within an industrial and commercial environment.

¹³⁵ The author overheard speculation from several visitors to the exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery on 16 February 1968 (its first public day) to the effect that the audacious and provocative accessibility of the exhibition's most valuable objects would surely result in losses.

¹³⁶ Comment on the planning for the possibility of theft is from Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, in conversation with the author, Oslo, 21 March 2004.

¹³⁷ The Craft Association of Australia (New South Wales Branch) was established in 1964, coordinating the formation of other state Craft Associations that would eventually comprise the membership of the Crafts Council of Australia, which was established in 1971. For further discussion on this, see Part 3: 20.

The range of objects in the exhibition was extensive, with over a thousand items displayed. These covered the following categories: ceramics (by forty designers for thirteen companies); furniture (by thirty-one designers for twenty-three companies); glass (by twenty-six designers for ten companies); jewellery, silver and enamel (by thirty-four designers for seventeen companies); lighting fixtures (by five designers for four companies); metal (by twenty-three designers for fifteen companies); plastics (by two designers for three companies); textiles (by thirty-nine designers for twenty-five companies) and miscellaneous objects such as toys, cameras, radios and hi-fi equipment and wood objects (by eight designers for ten companies).¹³⁸

If museum guards were exasperated by visitors 'trying out' the objects on display, at least Key's and Paulsson's manifestos on the role of Scandinavian design, *Beauty for all* and *More beautiful objects for everyday use*, were put to the test by those engaging with these objects in such a direct and unselfconscious way.¹³⁹ Furthering the conflict between the urge to touch and not touching the objects, the exhibition organisers had recommended that several of the chairs in the exhibition were to be displayed directly on the floor, with visitors being encouraged to sit in them. For many, the author included, this provided an opportunity to try out famous examples of major designers' work that had only been seen previously in photographs or catalogues.¹⁴⁰

Given the lengthy professional experience of most of the exhibitors, the lack of detailed information about the individual designers and manufacturers of the objects in the exhibition and its accompanying catalogue was a weakness, although it did reinforce the egalitarianism of the content by not focusing on personalities or the status and prestige of objects produced by venerable companies. This criticism, however, is from the perspective of the present, when museum exhibition catalogues are expected to carry scholarly discourses on the subjects at hand, and to catalogue each work in meticulous detail. Perhaps more important from the organisers' point of view, was that the

¹³⁸ One thousand was the round figure used in press releases to quantify the number of exhibits, however, this varied with each venue depending on the space available. The invoices from manufacturers supplying works to the exhibition list works that may not have been included in the final configurations of the exhibition in each venue.

¹³⁹ The author worked in the institution adjacent to the Western Australian Art Gallery and maintained an informal dialogue with the Gallery's security attendants during the exhibition, a number of whom spoke about the difficulty in supervising people, particularly unsupervised children, 'testing' the chairs on the floor.

¹⁴⁰ For the author, this meant trying out (and subsequently purchasing one from the Perth dealer, Aherns) the widely-publicised laminated wood and leather *Siesta* chair, designed by Ingemar Relling for the Norwegian company Vestlandske Møbelfabrikk in 1966.

catalogue was available at a low cost and, in several venues, free of charge, making it widely available. The analytical, theoretical and contextual approach to design and the applied arts that is now common in museum catalogues would have been highly unusual in the 1960s. At that time, the look and feel of the few design and craft catalogues produced by museums aimed to imitate the adventurous graphic design of progressive architecture and design magazines such as *Interiors*, *Domus* and *Mobilia*, with minimal text and short essays.

The dramatic visuals provided in the exhibition's press kits and repeated in the catalogue would have been ideally suited to reproduction in magazines, but this appears not to have been sought by the organisers, or was unsuccessfully negotiated with the relevant journals beforehand. Even more visually interesting as a record of the exhibition was the commissioned documentary photography of several of the installations.¹⁴¹ The installation of the exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales was photographed in colour and black and white by the eminent Australian documentary and architectural photographer, Max Dupain, as were the photographs by George Mehes of its installation at the National Gallery of Victoria. To date, these have only been published in the exhibition report, and remained publicly unseen in Australia and, to the author's knowledge, in Scandinavia (where original prints remain with the official exhibition records in Helsinki).¹⁴² These photographs reflect the fine and careful documentary work of the period by such well-known and highly regarded photographers. Their value for this thesis lies in the clear way that they reveal the exhibition's intent and illustrate the relationships between its structural components and exhibited objects.

The photographs show the exhibition as the visitor would have seen it, at eye level from a standing position. Alternative views show how the relationship of objects on the display platforms to the photo enlargements on the abutting vertical screens could change depending on the position of the viewer. In one view of the Art Gallery of New South Wales installation, for instance, a group of glass objects can be seen in front of an image of a frolicking child. With a change of position, a viewer would then have seen the same objects in front of a commanding, yet informal photograph of the King of Sweden, Gustav VI Adolf, a keen amateur archaeologist, working at a Viking

¹⁴¹ The commissioning of the documentary photographs of the exhibition installations was organised by Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg with advice from the participating venues.

¹⁴² Tarras-Wahlberg, op. cit.

excavation site. In this juxtaposition, we sense the fragility of glass in a potentially destructive accidental encounter with the exuberant child, as well as its artistic value as a carefully preserved historical artefact in relation to the monarch's interest in Swedish material culture.

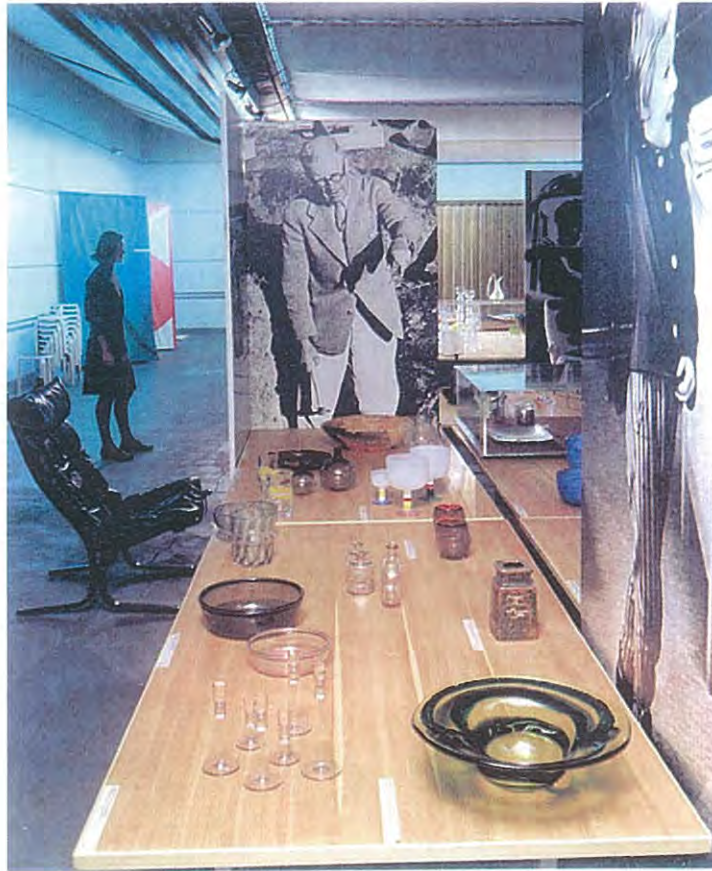


Fig. 17
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition installation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

A further side-step framed a view of the exhibition's most valuable object, Georg Jensen's 1952 silver water pitcher designed by Henning Koppel, audaciously placed atop a low, polished Perspex showcase, itself positioned in front of a view of a fishing fleet in a Norwegian fjord. In this placement, this object's value and preciousness is subservient to its implied accessibility and, through its organic, functional design and breathtaking use of precious material, its connection with pure water. Such eloquent visual spectacles animated the entire exhibition, providing for visitors a wordless guide to the sources of design and the uniqueness of its Nordic context while reinforcing the strong role of carefully designed objects as an embodiment of Scandinavian identity and material culture. Such an interplay of two systems of visual information conforms to

concepts of visual rhetoric discussed by Hanno Ehses. Drawing from the classification of figures of speech—contrast, resemblance, contiguity and gradation—he explains that:

It is a necessary condition for all figures of speech that they presuppose a basic understanding of grammatical forms and lexical content from which departure is possible....In using...rhetorical figures, a lower literal order is transformed into a higher rhetorical order, giving the expression more vitality...Whether the literal or rhetorical order is used depends on the number of structured relationships that have materialized, which also implies reference to pre-existing cultural knowledge that pre-dates a design.¹⁴³

Ehses' discusses this in relation to the system of signage of the theatre poster, but the information provided through the juxtaposition of familiar visual images and previously unencountered objects in the exhibition can be similarly read. Ehses describes this situation as:

...a state of mutual equilibrium between both preservative and changeable forces. In responding to existing expectations and supplying something unexpected at the same time, a design produces a challenge (a pleasant or unpleasant surprise) in addition to a renewed and extended perspective.¹⁴⁴

As part of a cultural intervention into the viewers' world, each of the exhibition's almost 1000 displayed works was a highly-developed object that 'stood in' for its designer, offering a variety of encoded meanings within the exhibition's larger master narrative that coalesced at the point of viewer reception. This corresponds with the theory of reception and interpretation discussed by Janet Wolff, in *The social production of art*:

... The meaning, which audiences 'read' in texts and other cultural products, is partly constructed *by* those audiences. Cultural codes, including language itself, are complex and dense systems of meaning, permeated by innumerable sets of connotations and significations.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ehses, op. cit., pp. 191–192.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.192.

¹⁴⁵ Wolff, J, 'Interpretation as re-creation', *The social production of art*, Macmillan, London, 1981, pp. 95–116.

Using this concept, we can take the widespread and relatively uniform positive reception of this cultural intervention (the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition) and examine it for what it revealed about dissatisfaction with the designed artefacts that represented Australian material culture, and why we were receptive to the Scandinavian model as an alternative.

The connections between object, person and place were implicit in the exhibition, and unavoidable in whatever version of it was encountered. Installation photographs document aspects of the exhibition as presented in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Hobart. While they show variations in the relationship between the photo enlargements and the displayed objects, they reveal some of the potent and stimulating visual interactions and juxtapositions available to visitors in all venues. These installations served as a theatre in which the visitor's imagination was activated to allow a personal interpretation of the constructed narrative to occur.

Apart from some photographs of objects being made, the images showed no object in use (except for Gustav's archaeologist's pick) and had little overt didacticism or sense of the advertisement. Instead, such objectives were implied through the contextualisation of objects with photographs. Objects were presented as coexisting with the natural and the built Nordic environment, leaving the viewer to imagine a 'consummation' of these objects and images through use. Their open placement on low platforms at table and coffee table height reinforced their domestic context and increased the tension between the desire to touch and compliance with art museum regulations. For many visitors to the exhibition this imagined consummation might have been a private and contemplative conjecture (or, through surreptitious handling of the objects on display, a guilty reality), but the display also stimulated animated discussion among viewers. Objects stimulated conversations between visitors about design, function, aesthetics, ingenuity and price, while they served their purpose as 'lessons' and design exemplars for groups of students. The tone of much of the press reportage was conversational and informal, suggesting that the exhibition was more intellectually accessible than the usual offerings of state art museums were to journalists:

When do chairs, knives and forks, mini dresses and cooking pots become art? Answer:
When they are good enough to be exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South

Wales...But puzzled members of the public may well scratch their heads more fiercely over these objects than they do already when confronted by mind bending modern painting and sculpture.¹⁴⁶

Reviewer Patrick McCaughey approached the exhibition with a rather more cynical approach:

Along with cigarette commercials, Scandinavian design provides us with our most powerful image of the good life...[s]itting at your natural wood table in your streamlined chair, buttering your bread with your handle-less Jacobsen knife, sipping your beer from a Boda glass and knocking the ash of your cigarette into an Orrefors ash tray would indeed make a hair-raising display of good taste.¹⁴⁷

The meaning of each object became polysemic as the visitor allowed adjacent objects and images to inflect its meaning. Thus for instance, a glass vase could be admired for its singular beauty, but displayed as part of an ensemble of other domestic objects such as metalware, textiles and furniture, it could become part of a larger narrative on the 'total work of art'. Such a collective meaning is understood not so much in the sense of the German term, *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total work of art), often used to describe the orchestration of design arts to a single stylistic theme or narrative, but more in the spirit of *lagom*.¹⁴⁸ This is a Swedish term with several shades of meaning around the concept of 'just right' or 'moderate' and 'not excessive', an unpretentiousness resulting from a balance between functionality and aesthetics. Such a reading also invoked Paulsson's *Vackrare vardagsvara* (*More beautiful objects for everyday use*) and its associations with the democratic accessibility of design.¹⁴⁹

Contributing to the polysemic readings of the displayed objects was the 'entry narrative' brought with every visitor: experiences that allowed them to decode the meanings encoded in designed products according to their own cultural experiences and references.¹⁵⁰ As an inverse example of this coding, for early visitors to the exhibition in Perth during its hot summer months, the imagery of the Scandinavian winter and of objects designed for use in that climate stood in dramatic contrast to their daily experience. Adding to this experience, the unusual and very pleasant scent of the

¹⁴⁶ G Gambie, 'Scandinavia's "pots and pans" art exhibition', *Sun*, 25 June 1968, n.p.

¹⁴⁷ P McCaughey, 'Scandinavian naturalness', *Age*, 12 October 1968, n.p.

¹⁴⁸ *lagom*: adv. just right (enough). *Prisma's Swedish-English dictionary*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 3rd ed., 1995, p. 308.

¹⁴⁹ G Paulson, *Vackrare vardagsvara*, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Stockholm, 1919.

¹⁵⁰ Such decoding is discussed by C Buckley, 'Made in patriarchy', in Margolin, op. cit., p. 258.

exhibition's newly-unpacked Baltic pine display system was an olfactory whiff of 'otherness' for Western Australians used to the look, feel and smell of the region's native hardwoods such as jarrah, which, rough-sawn and oiled, was then enjoying a resurgence in popularity in contemporary architecture and interior design.

Using display techniques that acknowledged the world of retail presentation and the trade fair, the exhibition also activated visitors' entry narratives to enable them to visually access, and mentally 'own', objects that, in a conventional museum presentation, could have seemed remote and devoid of life. The visitor had the unusual experience in an art museum of not looking at works of art on the walls, but instead being surrounded by art objects that, on open display, insinuated themselves into the viewer's personal space.

Such a physical immersion in the exhibition triggered a sensory reaction to its contents, with the qualities of each object building upon the next to 'educate' the viewer's eye as he or she moved through the space. Wolff describes this process as the 'hermeneutic circle' which:

...describes the process of interpretation as an essentially interactive one. The interpreter approaches the material with certain preconceived ideas about it, projecting meanings on to it, and anticipating its nature. In the light of his or her contact with the material, those preconceptions can then be modified, and a 'circular' process of projection and modification eventually allows the interpreter to achieve a satisfactory understanding.¹⁵¹

Through this process, the modification of the visitor's entry narrative, is cumulative and so continues beyond the exhibition hall as a tool for the visitor to use in a daily assessment of the value of objects. That every object in *Design in Scandinavia* was capable of being possessed gave added impetus to the stimulated viewer to replicate the encounter in everyday life. Ownership of such objects, and by implication some modification of one's life to accommodate a re-constructed, and most probably fantasised Scandinavian aesthetic, was possible, thus taking the art museum experience into the everyday realm of the tangible and achievable.

¹⁵¹ Wolff, op. cit., p.101.

The selection of objects and their display juxtaposed with images of everyday life in Scandinavia, focused attention on the users of such objects rather than on the manufacturers, in a theme that was introduced by catalogue essayist Ulf Hård af Segerstad:

‘Show me the possessions, and I will show you the man’. This variation of an old saying is sometimes quoted in Scandinavia when discussing the furnishings of private homes or public environments. One could also extend this to read: ‘Show me the products, and I will show you the country’. ... The Scandinavians now present a joint exhibition of their goods, not only to show the world what kind of articles we produce, but also to reveal what kind of people we are.¹⁵²

The openness of the exhibition design placed the objects in a visually accessible setting. Objects displayed informally on overlapping, horizontal table-like display surfaces successfully evoked a sense of the domestic in the difficult context of an institutional space. This approach to presentation encouraged and facilitated the close inspection of the exhibits and, by encouraging visitors to move around and between the displays, allowed objects to be seen from all angles and in juxtaposition with each other, as if in a domestic setting. Silver objects were placed alongside those made of plastics, wood or glass, avoiding a hierarchy of materials and instead encouraging an appreciation of the design and functional qualities of each object, whatever its material. Such strategies subverted the more formal relationship between viewer and art that visitors to these museums expected. Instead of facing the usual wall-mounted chronology or connected narrative of displays of paintings, drawings or prints, the viewer was encouraged to engage with the room, to stoop and bend and seek other viewing points to understand the ways that low-positioned objects could be juxtaposed to form visual narratives of potential use and function. Views between groups of objects to other groups of exhibits created a non-sequential reading of the exhibition, the viewer and the subject together animating the museum space.

The installation of the exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery was divided between its Upper and Lower Galleries, with most of the unique or limited edition objects displayed on the lower, introductory floor and mass-produced objects (tableware, utility furniture, toys, sporting goods and light fittings) in the first floor

¹⁵² Hård af Segerstad, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Upper Gallery. It was unusual for the Gallery to displace its entire permanent collection for a touring exhibition, but its Director, Frank Norton, had readily agreed to the request in order to secure the exhibition and to be able to display it without the space restrictions that a more usual one-floor exhibition would have imposed.¹⁵³

The result of this dispersal of the exhibition was that on entering at the ground floor Lower Gallery, visitors encountered the more sculptural and visually diverse objects first. It was then necessary to leave that gallery, return to the foyer and ascend via the Gallery's and the Western Australian Museum's shared grand staircase to the Upper Gallery past the Gallery's well-known central attraction, Hans Heysen's large 1922 painting of rural Australia, *Droving into the Light*, which had been in this position for several decades. The more commercial nature of the objects displayed there offered a different experience. Comments from visitors that this exhibition had given the Gallery the feel of a department store were entirely understandable, particularly as Perth's major department stores all operated in late Victorian and Edwardian structures built as grand emporia in the same style and period of gold-rush prosperity as the 1905 Art Gallery. Several had timber-floored upper floor art galleries similar in ambience to the Western Australian Art Gallery and presented their exhibits in a dated picture-gallery style.¹⁵⁴

Other visitors, familiar with Perth's modern specialty furnishing and gift stores, found a more obvious connection with the objects on display, many of which were already available at specialty design shops such as David Foulkes Taylor, Norway Designs and Dansk Décor. For many customers of these businesses, the pleasure of recognition of objects that they had purchased was a validation of the appropriateness of Scandinavian design for the contemporary open-design houses they were commissioning from local architects.

¹⁵³ Nurmesniemi requested the use of the Art Gallery of Western Australia's Upper Gallery via a letter from Tarras-Wahlberg to Frank Norton on 22 March 1967, to which he responded, noting that his Chairman had readily agreed to the request. DISF/AGWA.

¹⁵⁴ Perth's major department stores in 1968 were Boans, Bairds, David Jones, Foys, Moores and Cox Brothers. The largest, Boans, had maintained an art gallery in its main city store since the 1930s.



Figs 18–19

David Foulkes Taylor shop, Perth, 1968 (photograph source: Curtin University)

David Foulkes Taylor’s shop was itself a beacon of modernism in Perth, with a purpose-designed, Le Corbusier-inspired building by Perth architect, the Bauhaus-trained Hungarian émigré, Julius Elischer. It had become a de facto gallery of modern design since 1965, when commissioned by David Foulkes Taylor, and was the only local business to advertise prominently the connection of its stock with the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.¹⁵⁵ In his review of the exhibition, the Western Australian art critic, Patrick Hutchings, refers to overheard disparaging commentary on Scandinavian design from more conservative members of Perth’s establishment: ‘It would be horribly cold to live with: like having a flat in David Foulkes Taylor’s shop.’¹⁵⁶ Hutchings’ review compared the design and material superiority of Scandinavian-manufactured objects to what he saw was the lack of design quality of Australian production and suggested that consumers could take lessons from the exhibition in influencing manufacturers to do better. He concludes:

This is something we should ponder: if we really want objects like these in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, we can have them: indeed, though this would be bad for Scandinavian trade, we could even force Australian manufacturers to provide such things for us. Not that we will: not for quite a while yet, anyhow. To form the taste, as

¹⁵⁵ David Foulkes Taylor, from a prominent Western Australian pastoral family, had close connections with a number of Perth’s cultural institutions, including the Western Australian Art Gallery. He was killed in a car accident in Victoria in 1966, leaving his business to his wife, who engaged his manager, Yvonne Allen to run it until 1969, when it was sold to Jim Brant. (DFT Archive AGWA) In 1983 Brant sold the building to the advertising firm, Cato, which extensively modified its interior. Since 2005, the building has been the headquarters of the Western Australian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. (For a detailed account of Foulkes Taylor’s own design work, see Part 2:16.

¹⁵⁶ P Hutchings, ‘The arts of ambience’, *The Critic*, University of Western Australia, Perth, vol. 8 no. 7, 22 March 1968, pp. 69–70.

to find the designers to satisfy it, is a complex double, dialectical, problem, and not one that we will solve overnight. But perhaps we will begin: let me suggest an exercise; go into your usual department store, look at the stock, and ask yourself *precisely how does it differ from the things in the Design in Scandinavia exhibition*. And then ask yourself: why did *we* have to go the *museum* to see pots and pans and table knives?¹⁵⁷

Critics and public alike throughout the exhibition's Australian tour repeated variations on this question. For art critic Donald Brook:

The Art Gallery of New South Wales looks like a dream department store, full of covetable domestic goodies from Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden ...
...The Scandinavians have a notion of the good life that is not contemptible. Their craftwork and industrial design (and some of these designs seem to go back to the thirties) is crisp, solidly virtuous, often strongly imaginative, and generally an example to us all.

Brook also attempted to break down the manufactured image of Scandinavian perfection:

The Scandinavian figures for alcoholism, suicide, infidelity and heart disease are probably on balance no worse than our own: and at least they drink out of decent glasses, stir their overdoses with an elegant spoon, seduce each other on durable hearthrugs and get fat in really comfortable chairs. The names of importers are in the back of the brochure. Local manufacturers beware.¹⁵⁸

The exhibition was possibly the first in Australian art museum history to bring the visual narrative and culture of the department store into the context of the museum.¹⁵⁹ Such an approach to display is now commonplace in museums, with their commercial sponsorships and displays of related commissioned commercial merchandise designed to capitalise on visitors' desire to spend in the rarefied atmosphere of a cultural institution, and to extend the financial value of the exhibition 'brand'. In 1968 this was rare, with few museums (other than the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of New South Wales) running more than small book kiosks with little more than

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ D Brook, 'Distinguishing between art and artifice', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 1968. Review of the exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

¹⁵⁹ The exhibition was also the first to display on a large scale, in the context of State-funded art museums, commercially available objects which were already on sale in all Australian cities.

souvenirs as supplementary material to their main stocks of books and catalogues for sale.



Figs 20–21

left: Window display of Scandinavian merchandise in David Jones department store, Rundle Street, Adelaide, April 1968

right: Window display of Scandinavian merchandise in Boans department store, Murray Street, Perth, February 1968

Retail culture was well developed, however, and in the exhibition's only non-museum venue, David Jones' Art Gallery in Adelaide, the staging of the exhibition raised the least amount of comparative commentary on the encroachment of commercial design upon the museum-validated realm of the rare, unique and otherwise unattainable object. Visitors there read the exhibition as an extension of the store's policy to promote exclusive imported products for the home, seamlessly promoted by an experienced public relations department. Importantly, the store was able to stock a large quantity of the exhibition's contents for sale in its relevant departments, thus allowing the exhibition visitors to 'consummate' the retail experience that had been denied them in the adjacent exhibition. Adelaide therefore remained the only city where visitors to the exhibition did not experience it in the context of its art museum. The Art Gallery of South Australia, although situated across the street from David Jones, remained uncommitted and disconnected from the project from start to finish, even though its own decorative arts collection had contained some fine examples of Swedish glass from the early 1950s.

This experience with the exhibition was a distinct advantage for David Jones when it staged a Scandinavian design promotion at its main Sydney store during the exhibition's run at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Thus, the Gallery was able to remain free of commercial links while the city's most prestigious department store, though its own

initiatives, did most of the promotion for the exhibition. As a result, Sydney visitors to the exhibition encountering the same, or similar, objects in the department store and the State gallery were able to experience, and potentially decode, readings of these objects as both retail and museum narratives on the nature of desire and consumption.

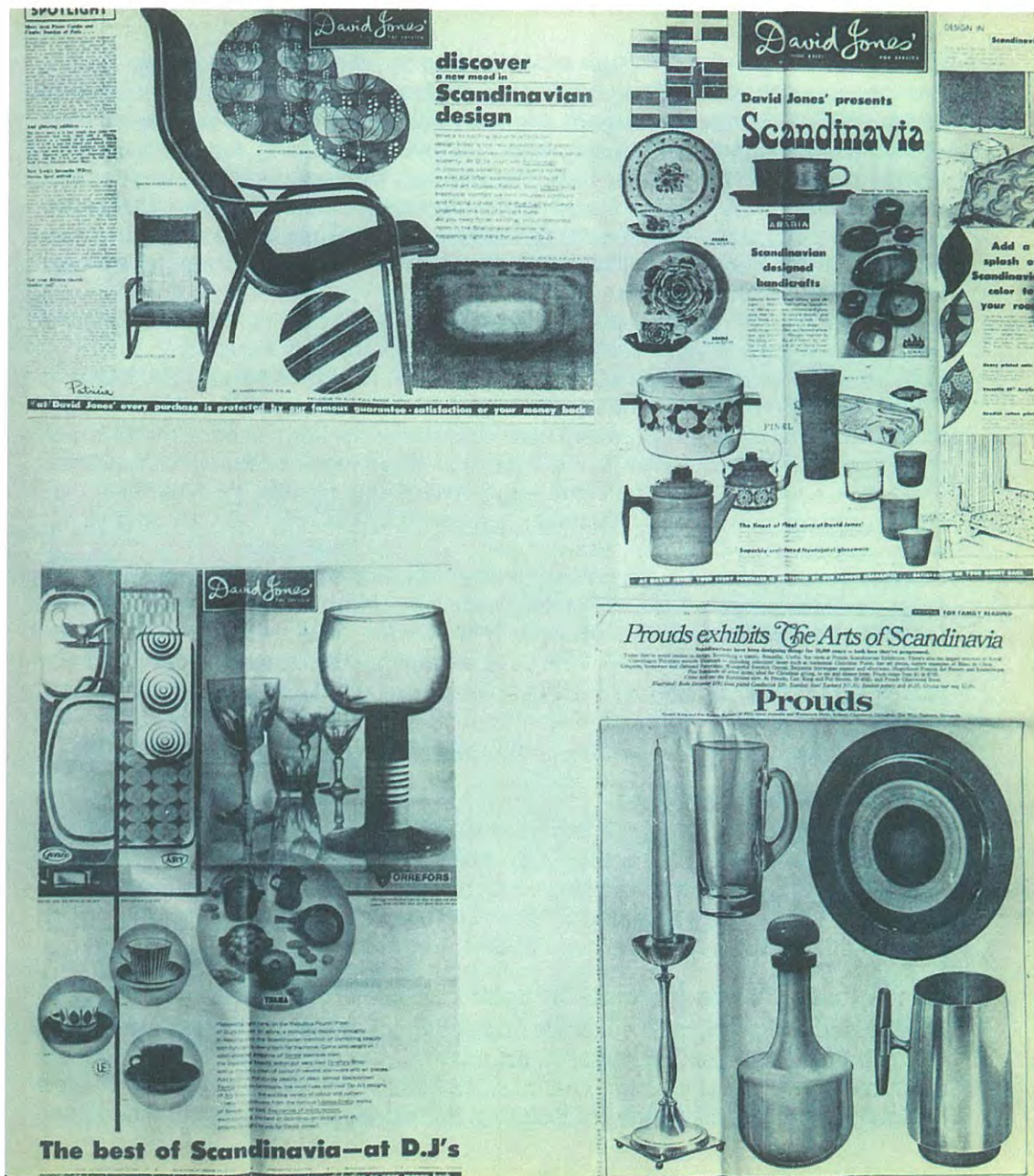


Fig. 22
Montage of press advertising from *Design in Scandinavia* final report

This desire to handle and purchase the objects on display was manifestly unable to be consummated in the museum context. Government-run museums, adhering to longstanding codes of conduct, were unable to direct visitors to commercial sources of

supply for the objects that they were so clearly responding to in the exhibition. The exhibition's Scandinavian organisers were aware that some of the AGDC directors and their Boards were concerned at the prospect of their venues being 'tainted' through an overt association with commerce and consumerism, particularly through a celebration of the usually marginalised fields of contemporary craft and industrial design.

There was a degree of circumspection in their efforts to separate the commercial aspects of the project from the cultural agenda.¹⁶⁰ The maintenance of an increasingly archaic museum culture of privileged access, collections built and displayed on the basis of educated taste and a value system driven from the history of fine arts connoisseurship, still shadowed the newer programs of public accessibility that the State gallery directors hoped the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition would address. In its concept and realisation, the exhibition foreshadowed the use of persuasive retail techniques that now inform many museums' exhibition promotion programs.

Visitors' readings and experiences of the exhibition played out differently in each place. In Perth, the exhibition displaced the Western Australian Art Gallery's entire permanent collection display, eclipsing the fine arts collections for almost seven weeks. This was a disappointment for some of the Gallery's regular visitors, used to visiting it during the summer holiday season and to seeing familiar paintings on the walls. For others, however, the experience of visiting the Gallery and seeing a total commitment of its space to craft and design was new and refreshing experience. Other venues installed the exhibition in their temporary exhibition areas, allowing their visitors to maintain some correspondence with their permanent collections.

Of all the venues, only the then new National Gallery of Victoria offered an architectural context in alignment with the exhibition's aesthetic. Working to a brief from the architect, Roy Grounds, Melbourne designers Grant and Mary Featherston's design for the building's interiors, with their extensive use of light-coloured wood panelling, floors and lighting baffles, and warm colour schemes showed a strong debt to contemporary Scandinavian design and provided a highly appropriate backdrop for the exhibition architecture and exhibits. *Design in Scandinavia* was only the second international show to be held in the Gallery's new building and attracted an audience

¹⁶⁰ In a 20 January 1966 letter to Olof Gummerus, Thor Thorvaldson noted that '...I had all along been worried that we must do nothing to upset the [AGDC] Directors and the whole apple cart...Missingham is anti-commercial and we must be careful not to do anything that may cause friction or cancellation.'
DISF/TK.

already familiar with Scandinavian design, resulting from the Gallery's support for it through its acquisition program since the late 1940s. The exhibition added lustre to the Gallery's new building and allowed visitors to gain through it a sense of a design continuum from a comparison with its displays of historical decorative arts and design in other parts of the building.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales provided a large, temporarily-canopied, single-level space for the exhibition, eliciting comparisons with the dowdy Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) in Sydney's Ultimo, at the time a museum far from being developed into its 1988 reincarnation as the Powerhouse Museum. However, with its rich collections of historical design, decorative, applied and industrial arts (with fine Scandinavian material amongst them), the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences would have provided the natural and appropriate host for the exhibition, but its lack of suitable space, prestige and disconnection with the Australian Gallery Directors' Council group mitigated against any involvement with the project.

While the Art Gallery of New South Wales provided no contextual connection with its collection, by staging the exhibition in the setting of contemporary art, it was able to validate its desired aesthetic value, an objective that would not have been able to be achieved by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in its state at the time. Despite the high profile the exhibition gave to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the exhibition made no impact on its acquisition policy or further exhibition programming, which did not include crafts or design.

In a later role-reversal, in 1989, the Powerhouse, then newly identified as Australia's major design museum, initiated discussions among the directors of the State art galleries on its proposed staging of another exhibition of Scandinavian design. Attempting to resurrect the cultural relationships established by *Design in Scandinavia* twenty years earlier, the proposal had been made by the Nordic Council of Ministers to the State galleries in 1988 and taken up by the Powerhouse's Head of Collection Development, Carl Andrew, who had been invited by the Nordic Council to visit Scandinavia that year. However, while ambitious in its scope, the project did not gain support and did not proceed.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Carl Andrew's research visit to Scandinavia was co-ordinated by Carl Thomas Edam, Special Projects Officer of the Nordic Council of Ministers, who had visited Sydney in 1988 at the invitation of the Design

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the Queensland Art Gallery were both forced to reduce the exhibition size and content to enable it to be accommodated in the smaller temporary exhibition galleries in their nineteenth-century buildings.

Nurmesniemi's pre-planning for these venues, however, meant that these restrictions did not compromise the integrity of his design or substantially dilute the impact of the exhibition content.



Figs 23–24

left: The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
right: The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery

In the Canberra venue, the Australian National University's Garran Hall, the installation of the exhibition was coordinated by the head of the ANU's Design Unit, Derek Wrigley (b.1924 Britain, arrived Australia 1947). This was a highly appropriate choice, as Wrigley, an architect who had trained at the Manchester School of Art and Design, had established the Industrial Design Council of Australia at ANU in 1958, with ANU designer, Fred Ward (1900–1990 Australia), and was a strong advocate of design reform. Ross Hohnen, as ANU's registrar, played an important supportive role for this fledgling organisation and his later unqualified support for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition is therefore understandable. Wrigley recalls that the only available space for the exhibition at ANU was in the Dining Hall of one of its residential colleges, Garran Hall. It was cleared of its furnishings and students took their meals in Burton Hall for

Board of the Australia Council. He reported a positive response to his visit to the Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) Steering Group for Cultural Presentations Abroad, which instructed him to pursue negotiations with the Australian Gallery Directors' Council. The AGDC's initial response was to express interest in an exhibition focused on the artist-craftsman in the design process, similar to the focus of the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. The NCM's advisor at the time was Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, by then the Executive Director of the Federation of Norwegian Design, who recommended instead that a more relevant exhibition for the NCM's aims should be focused on industrial design, which by 1988 had begun to eclipse craft practice in the forefront of Scandinavian innovation.

the duration of the exhibition, which filled the entire space.¹⁶² This was a unique event for ANU, which had no regular exhibition program at the time, and brought its support for design into a wider public focus.



Fig. 25
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at Garran Hall, Australian National University

The development of ANU's major buildings during the 1950s and 1960s, along with its unique Design Unit, had encouraged a local discourse on the importance of design in the educational environment. The extensive brief for the design of the University's furniture had allowed Fred Ward to draw from his experience in the design of inexpensive, practical furniture using native Australian timbers. While we can see in Ward's work a line of influence from the Arts and Crafts Movement through to the work of British designer, Gordon Russell, it also reveals similarities to the simple and practical Swedish 'utility furniture' of the 1940s.¹⁶³ Much of Ward's success in maintaining the aesthetic quality and craftsmanship of the ANU furniture within a strict, even stringent, budget was his contracting of the work to post-war immigrant European cabinetmakers, many of whom had gravitated to Canberra following their earlier involvements as workers on the Snowy River Scheme. Their contribution to Canberra was reported in the *Australian Home Beautiful*:

¹⁶² Notes from the author's interview with Derek Wrigley, Canberra, 8 March 2007.

¹⁶³ *Fred Ward: A selection of furniture and drawings*, Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, 1996.

Canberra has moved into the spotlight as a centre of furniture making with a general standard of craftsmanship much higher than in other cities. New Australians are mainly responsible. They appreciate Australian woods and handle them with respect ... A wide variety of methods can be seen in the work because craftsmen come from many different countries – Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, Austria and Hungary – places of recognized craftsmanship ... I hope these newcomers will have a real effect on furniture-making in this country ... A fortunate aspect of furniture-making is that the very best can be produced at competitive prices by small groups working in almost primitive conditions. [Article illustrated with furniture made by Karl Schreiner, Alfons Steutz, Tadeusz Krol, Oswald Paseka and John Cheyne.]¹⁶⁴

Through Ward's and Wrigley's work and advocacy, ANU had become associated with design (even though it would not establish formal craft and design studies until the 1970s) and provided an appropriate platform for discussions on *Design in Scandinavia's* implications for Australia's design education policies and the state of its design-led industries. The Canberra School of Art (now the ANU School of Art) was established on the principles of craft training, with workshops in ceramics, textiles, gold and silver smithing, wood and furniture design and, later, glass, under the direction of established artists in those fields of practice. Under the directorship of the German artist, Udo Sellbach, the School was perhaps the closest to a Scandinavian model of training where craft design and the more traditional arts of painting, sculpture and printmaking co-existed with an equality of purpose seldom seen elsewhere in Australia at the time.

¹⁶⁴ 'New Australians...new furniture', *Australian Home Beautiful*, March 1955, pp. 58–60.

8. A Finnish vision: the exhibition designer

The exhibition's designer, Antti Nurmesniemi, was born in Hämeenlinna, Finland on 8 August 1927, and died in Helsinki on 12 September 2003.¹⁶⁵ As a young man, he developed a keen interest in film and an ambition to make documentaries. A hobby of building model aircraft as a youth and later working in aircraft construction during the war gave him an understanding of the nature of wood, metal and plastics and the need to extract the most from the least amount of scarce materials.¹⁶⁶ He studied industrial design at Helsinki's Central School of Applied Arts from 1947, graduating in interior design in 1950. During this time, he also worked on set design for a film studio, an experience that gave him a life-long appreciation for the power of the image. He joined the Helsinki office of architects, Viljo Revell and Keijo Petäjä, then under great pressure developing the Centre for Industrial Organisations for its completion in time for the 1952 Helsinki summer Olympic Games.

As a young design modernist of the post-war reconstruction period, Nurmesniemi was energised by the success of Tapio Wirkkala's winning design for the Finnish exhibition at the 1951 Milan Triennial.

[It] ...reinforced the identity of the post-war generation as cosmopolitan designers, and erased forever the more mundane status of old-fashioned 'decorative artists'. Almost overnight, industrial design had established its artistry and forged its way into the fields of architecture and pictorial art.¹⁶⁷

On the recommendation of Olof Gummerus (who maintained good connections in Italy from his time there as a resident), Nurmesniemi spent six months in 1954 working in the Milan office of the Italian architect, Giovanni Romano, joining a circle of younger Italian architects making their impact through the post-war *Ricostruzione* (Reconstruction) period in Italy.

Nurmesniemi's design approach to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition had its genesis in his winning exhibition design in the competition for the eightieth anniversary

¹⁶⁵ Nurmesniemi's career is discussed in P Toivanen, 'A cosmopolitan of design', *Form Function Finland*, no. 4, 2003, pp. 12–15.

¹⁶⁶ Nurmesniemi's experimental use of plastics in the early 1950s is discussed in T Poutasuo, 'Plastic pioneer', *Form Function Finland*, no. 3, 2003, pp. 17–19.

¹⁶⁷ K Kalin, 'Antti Nurmesniemi starting points: The rationalist's office', in M-L Bell et.al., *Antti Nurmesniemi: To reflect and to design*, Kaupungin Taidemuseo, Helsinki, 1992, p. 19.

exhibition of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design at the Helsinki Art Exhibition Hall in 1955. This was followed by a joint exhibition with his wife, Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi, presented in April 1957 at the Helsinki showroom of Artek, the company that produced the furniture designed by Alvar Aalto. In both projects, Nurmesniemi developed his ‘photographic programme’, in which the use of giant photographic enlargements was a key element in providing a powerful visual structure to exhibitions of relatively small and intimate objects. Reviewing the exhibition, the critic, Erik Kruskopf, observed:

The overall effect was one of opulence, achieving a refined emphasis, which nonetheless complemented the aesthetic play, through the aid of a few giant photographic enlargements which were placed on the walls, as if in the wings ... Together, most of these photos formed a fugue-like interpretation of the patterned surface effects, in other words of a subject matter central to industrial art. The unity of subject and material was intact in every single photograph, even if it often remained obscure to the uninitiated.¹⁶⁸

Nurmesniemi’s experience in Milan eventually led to him being commissioned by Gummerus to design the Finnish section of the 1960 Milan Triennale. With an emphasis on a low horizontal line, he poised glass and polished grey granite display platforms on barely-visible pine stands in a bare white hall, in a development of the ‘floating’ deconstructed nature of his earlier projects. For the 1964 Triennale, Nurmesniemi, in a design partnership with Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi, won the competition for the exhibition architecture of the Finnish section, with a design reflecting the Triennale’s theme of ‘Free time’. Here again he used photographic backdrops illustrating aspects of the natural environment of Finland—water, forests, snow, clouds and rocks—mounted this time on diorama-like, curved screen walls against which were suspended examples of traditional and modern Finnish leisure equipment such as skis, sleds and canoes.

This consciously sculptural approach to the exhibition, for which its designer was awarded the Triennale’s Grand Prix, transformed a trade display into a total design object, in which the exhibits could be seen and understood as performers in a narrative on the Finnish psyche. This approach furthered, for an international audience, the earlier narratives of Finland’s national romanticism that had been so successfully interpreted

¹⁶⁸ E Kruskopf, ‘Antti Nurmesniemi – Vuokko Eskolin: Näyttely artekissa’, *Arkkitehti*, 3/1957, Helsinki, cited by Kalin, op. cit., p. 25.

by Tapio Wirkkala in his exhibition design work for the Milan Triennale of 1951 and 1954.

Nurmesniemi brought this experience to the task of designing *Design in Scandinavia*, constructing an engaging and wider Nordic narrative from a kit of exhibition components and a ‘cast’ of over one thousand objects. While he was a member of a team of curator/selectors that travelled throughout Scandinavia sourcing works for the exhibition, his visionary role as the architect and his understanding of the design process was crucial to the final selection and orchestration of the objects.¹⁶⁹ His interest in the design of everyday objects stemmed from an understanding of their use:

The language of design is the language of things and environments. It is a very rich language with its own dialects. It speaks to us of the level of our culture, the orientation of our technology and of the kind of decisions we have made in developing and cherishing our culture. In their own different ways, the language of design is spoken by coffee cups, cars and houses, advertising posters and street signs, furniture and interiors. The language of design is the non-verbal language of the practical and visual. Its roots delve deeply into local conditions, but its message is universal.¹⁷⁰

The Nurmesniemis’ visit to Perth for the installation of the exhibition was their first trip to Australia and their first outside of Europe. Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi (b. 1930 Finland) was the better known of the couple in Australia, as she had revolutionised Finnish design in the 1950s, as the artistic director of the Finnish textile company, Marimekko, from 1953 to 1964, where she created many of its most well-known ‘signature’ designs.

The most successful and enduring of Eskolin-Nurmesniemi’s designs for Marimekko was the 1957 striped cotton *Jokapoika* (Every Boy) shirt, worn throughout Finland by men, women and children alike and, internationally, becoming a highly recognisable and enduring symbol of Finnish design egalitarianism. These and other Marimekko designs had been imported into Australia since 1957 by the Sydney interior designer, Marion Hall Best, fabric dealer Libby Hall and the Finnish Importing Company, finding a market among a design-oriented clientele and becoming the most recognisable and

¹⁶⁹ Nurmesniemi’s design philosophy is discussed in A Nurmesniemi, *De mangfoldige mål for industrial design (The countless aims of industrial design)*, Dansk Design Center, Copenhagen, 1996.

¹⁷⁰ A Nurmesniemi, ‘The two seas’, in M-L Bell, op. cit., pp. 183–184.

well-known Finnish product sold at the time in Australia.¹⁷¹ Eskolin-Nurmesniemi founded her own company, Vuokko, in 1964, and wearing her own striking designs for simple summer dresses, she (and her colleague, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, also often dressed in Marimekko) became walking advertisements for the exhibition during their stay in Perth, as well being the subject of articles in the ‘women’s interest’ sections of the print media.¹⁷²

For me material, colour and print are as important as the piece of clothing itself. I always design the material out of which my dresses are made, Mrs Nurmesniemi said. Her dress styles are simple to the stage of being almost tubular ... I think the main principles of dressing are regulated by nature and the climate, she said.¹⁷³

Another article stressed the practicality of her clothing and its suitability to Australia’s casual way of life:

Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark are four countries with one tradition of design, readily recognised throughout the world. The characteristic combination of the practical with the aesthetic is carried through to Scandinavian fashions ... Her [Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg’s] own Scandinavian wardrobe can be described as simple, stark and stunning ... The styles are ideal for Australians as they are casual and hardwearing.¹⁷⁴



Fig. 26
Illustration by *The Advertiser* fashion artist, ‘Ina’, depicting Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg in several of her Marimekko outfits¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ See Part Two: 16 for further discussion of the retailing of Marimekko in Australia.

¹⁷² Nurmesniemi’s fashion designs were discussed in ‘Finds expression in design’, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 20 February 1968. Tarras-Wahlberg’s wardrobe was discussed in ‘Fashion focus’, *News*, Adelaide, 4 April 1968.

¹⁷³ ‘Finds expression in design’, *Advertiser*, 20 February 1968.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Fashion focus’, *News*, Adelaide, 4 April 1968. The fabric of the dress on the left is Marimekko’s *Linssi* pattern, designed by Kaarina Kellömaki, 1966.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

While in Perth, Antti Nurmesniemi spoke about his work to design students from the Western Australian Institute of Technology at the invitation of Anthony Russell, its Head of Design and the Western Australian representative of the Design Council of Australia.¹⁷⁶ Russell had acted as an advisor on design matters to the Western Australian Art Gallery and maintained a friendship with Nurmesniemi after the project. The Nurmesniemis were taken sailing on the Swan River, revelling in the Perth summer heat, a memory they vividly recalled in their lakeside house in the depths of the Finnish winter.¹⁷⁷

Antti Nurmesniemi also designed the exhibition's graphic program, which included its poster, catalogue and final report. All used a strong graphic element of dark blue, red and yellow shapes based on forms of utensils. It followed a similar, earlier design that Nurmesniemi had used in advertising for Högfors enamelware in 1964.¹⁷⁸



Fig. 27
Design in Scandinavia catalogue and report

The planning, organisation and presentation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition had taken seven years, spanning a period of significant change for Scandinavia's design and manufacturing sectors and of aspiration and growth for Australia's design and craft industries. As the last of its type, the exhibition can be seen as the final manifestation of Nordic rhetoric about Scandinavia's superiority in the design and production of the applied arts, orchestrated by its official propagandists to stimulate a distant and still unknown and untapped market.

¹⁷⁶ Anthony Russell was the author's supervisor in his final year of undergraduate design training at the Western Australian Institute of Technology in 1966.

¹⁷⁷ Recollections from Antti and Vuokko Nurmesniemi in conversation with the author at their home in Helsinki, 9 November 1999.

¹⁷⁸ M-L Bell, op. cit., p. 86.

9. Objects of the good life: the exhibits

The exhibition was memorable not only for the quality of its exhibits, but also for the orchestration of these objects within a constructed temporary space. Designed to lead the eye from one object to the next, the installation placed each object conceptually, if not stylistically to the next, allowing the viewer to find in such arrangements a commonality of rationale and approach to design. Such visual cohesion and fastidious placement has been central to the design of Scandinavian interiors and exhibitions since the early twentieth century, a strategy often planned to disguise a poverty of construction materials or a lack of space. The engagement with daylight, an enduring and deeply rooted characteristic of Nordic architecture and interior design, was obvious in the exhibition's open layout of light-coloured wood screens and plinths and horizontal display emphasis. Some sections of the exhibition were roofed with translucent fabric, creating tent-like enclosures evoking temporary outdoor summer structures for the display of furniture and objects. This approach allowed those galleries with natural lighting (even the unpromising, dimly lit Edwardian spaces of the Western Australian Art Gallery) to form at least a temporary engagement with a Scandinavian Functionalist design agenda.

The extensive use of printed textiles in the form of hanging banners gave the exhibition its initial visual impact. The designs included Maija Isola's and Armi Ratia's supergraphic designs for the Finnish textile company, Marimekko; Timo Sarpaneva's fluid designs for Ambiente; and Dora Jung's precise linear woven designs for Tampella (both major Finnish textile manufacturers). Using these textiles in this way raised the colour 'temperature' of all the exhibition spaces, effectively obliterating the walls behind them and cocooning visitors within an open and vividly coloured textile tent. Hung behind the photographic views of the Nordic landscape, this placement subverted the textiles' planned use for curtains and soft furnishings, instead suggesting the region's colouration of the seasons and the shimmering effects of the Aurora Borealis.

Glass provided another strong visual element of the exhibition, ranging from the colourless but highly textured designs of Finnish designers, Tapio Wirkkala and Timo Sarpaneva (for the Finnish firm of Iittala) to the high-keyed pop colours in the work of Finnish designers, Kaj Franck and Oiva Toikka (for the glass company, Nuutajärvi-Notsjö). A contrast in style was offered by the dark intensity and jewel-like qualities of

the work of Swedish designers, Sven Palmqvist, Gunnar Cyrén and Ingeborg Lundin (for the Swedish glass firm of Orrefors).

Furniture was a dominant element through all sections, displayed invitingly on low plinths to bring a human scale to the exhibition and capture the gaze of visitors coming in to the Gallery from the hot streets outside. All pieces displayed were functional and many had been in long production, such well-trialled designs (in Europe if not in Australia) giving authority to the exhibition's themes, and scale to the displays. Most of the pieces reinforced the dominance of wood as a key structural and aesthetic element in Scandinavian furniture design. Examples of Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto's laminated birch designs of the 1930s for the Finnish furniture manufacturer, Artek, and the Swedish designer, Bruno Mathsson's bentwood designs demonstrated a rational approach to mass-production. In contrast was the flawless craftsmanship and structural fluidity of designs by the Danish masters of modern furniture: Finn Juhl (for Neils Vodder); Hans Wegner (for Getama) and and Børge Mogensen (for Fredericia Stolefabrik), along with production pieces from well-established Danish furniture manufacturers with traditions of innovative design, such as Johannes Hansens Møbelsnedkeri.

In stylistic opposition to the refined classicism of the Danish work, the sculptural and technically ingenious 1965 fibreglass and leather Karuselli (Carousel) swivelling and rocking lounge chair by Finnish designer, Yrjö Kukkapuro (for the Finnish firm of Haimi), animated the spaces around it. This dramatic design gave a hint of the innovations in furniture that were beginning to emerge in Finland and Sweden, and to be seen in a few Australian showrooms during the exhibition's duration (but which, other than the *Karuselli*, were not included as exhibits as they were introduced to the market after the exhibition selection had been finalised).



Figs 28–29

left: The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria with black *Karuselli* chair in foreground

right: The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition the Art Gallery of New South Wales, with black *Karuselli* chair in foreground

Metalwork and jewellery from numerous companies gave the visitor an opportunity to see some of the most accomplished design work in these fields. The open display of a number of valuable works in silver was audacious and provocative, providing a sheen and sparkle to the ensembles and drawing visitors to them. The dominance of the Copenhagen firm of Georg Jensen Sølvsmiede (Georg Jensen Silversmith) was given expression through a selection of the large-scale, organic modernist work in silver of its most famous designers, among them Henning Koppel, Magnus Stephensen, Søren Georg Jensen and Nanna Ditzel. In contrast to the opulence of the silver, was a wide selection of objects in aluminium, stainless steel and enamel by designers such as the architect Arne Jacobsen (for the Danish firm, Stelton), Tias Eckhoff (for the Norwegian firm, Norsk Stålpres) and Antti Nurmesniemi (for the Finnish firm, Kymmene Aktiebolag). Large, sculptural and highly textured gold and silver jewellery, inspired by the rugged landscape of Lapland, by the Finnish jeweller, Björn Weckström, was among the most memorable exhibits. Conceptually and stylistically, it linked to the work of a fellow Finn, Tapio Wirkkala, whose similar expression of these landforms in glass up-ended the conventions of that material and influenced the design of glass for the following decade. Wirkkala's legacy as the designer of Finland's triumphal Milan Triennial exhibitions of the 1950s was also palpable in Nurmesniemi's exhibition architecture and in the organisation of sight lines and placement of key works to animate the spaces and stimulate the eye.

The ceramics displayed included unique works in stoneware and porcelain, by artists such as Sweden's Signe Persson-Melin and Finland's Liisa Hallamaa, Birger Kaipiainen and Friedl Kjellberg (all working as artists with the Finnish Arabia company). Other approaches to ceramics were seen in the production tableware by Danish designers such as Henning Koppel (for Bing & Grøndahl); Axel Salto and Gertrud Vasegaard (for Royal Copenhagen Porcelain); and Sweden's Stig Lindberg (for Gustavsberg). One of the most memorable ceramic objects was a very large and deep stoneware floor bowl by the Danish ceramicist, Nils Kähler (for Herman Kähler), its breathtaking simplicity of form and glaze encapsulating the exhibition themes with humility and virtuosity combined in one seamless and grounded object.¹⁷⁹ Such works contributed to the visual drama of the exhibition, punctuating it with the forms and eloquent use of materials that had earned their designers international accolades during the previous twenty years.

Those knowledgeable about Scandinavian post-war design history would have recognised the 'iconic' status of many objects that had received international notice from the late 1940s, as result of their inclusion in earlier Italian, American and French exhibitions of Scandinavian design, and in the showrooms of some of the specialist design stores in Australia. Some of these objects had been seen, and sold, in Australia (albeit to a very limited and knowledgeable clientele), while others had been plagiarised by Australian companies and brought to the wider market in a debased form. Seeing examples of the original designs for the first time in the exhibition was for many a realisation that their knowledge and preconceptions of 'Scandinavian design' had been based on substantially inferior copies.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ This work is now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

¹⁸⁰ See Part Three: 21: Scandinavian-influenced craft and design production in Australia.



Fig. 30.1–20
 Selection of objects included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition
 (Details of these objects in Figures list)

Apart from such well-known and successful designs, which had been produced from the 1930s to the 1950s, the majority of the objects displayed in the exhibition had been recently designed and produced. The ‘cut-off’ date for selection and inclusion of objects in the exhibition was about mid-1966 in order for the exhibition design to be finalised. Included were decorative and functional objects by designers who had become leading figures for their innovative design work for Scandinavia’s most successful companies. Despite the inclusion of such established works from what then was the recent past, the exhibition did not incorporate examples of the earlier, key historical works from 1900 to 1930 that were the precursors to the contemporary works on display. This, along with the lack of didactic exhibition texts to explain the development of Scandinavian design during the twentieth century, deprived those less knowledgeable about Scandinavian design history of a full context for understanding what it was they were viewing.

This comparative limitation was beyond the scope of the exhibition, probably because of insurance costs and the security problems associated with the long-term loans of what would have had to be museum objects. It suggests an over-estimation on the part of the organisers of the depth of knowledge of the field in Australia. In reality, only the National Gallery of Victoria was able to provide, through its permanent Australian and international decorative arts collection displays, a historical design context for the average visitor.

For those visitors knowledgeable about contemporary design, it would have been clear that much of the work in the exhibition had been designed with the same understanding of the principles of the Modern Movement that had informed designers worldwide since the 1930s. Separated from the Nordic rhetoric of the exhibition context, many of the objects (to those not familiar with Scandinavian design history) could have come from the studios of designers and makers in Germany, France, Italy, The Netherlands or Britain. All were places with advanced design cultures and long histories of design innovation responding to the *zeitgeist*, and to the new technologies available to designers in Europe, Britain, Japan and North America. Indeed, by 1968, an unprecedented homogeneity of design was evident in Europe, with similar explorations of form, materials and colours being undertaken by a younger wave of designers across the continent. Had the same material in the exhibition been presented under a different cultural framework and promotional banner—for instance, that of Germany or The Netherlands—begs the question of whether Australian audiences would have responded

differently, or been as interested. In this hypothesis, other cultural readings and myths would have replaced the exhibition's Nordic theme—the imperatives of German technology or Dutch ingenuity perhaps—but I believe that, collectively, the objects would ultimately have presented a sense of Nordic 'otherness' to the Australian viewer. The cumulative effect of fluid and unadorned forms, natural materials, a light and clear colour palette, and visible functionalism was too heady a mix for viewers not to have tapped into a consciousness of Scandinavia as a cultural identity, inextricably linked with modernity.

The Scandinavian countries were to continue such models of non-textual visual representation two years later at *Expo '70* in Osaka, Japan, where the participating countries used the often spectacular and architecturally innovative design of their national pavilions to articulate cultural ambition and achievement.¹⁸¹ The Scandinavian Pavilion, a joint venture shared by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, used a simple architectural form to house its exhibition theme, *Protection of Environment in an Industrialized Society*. Its exhibit was an environmental narrative of images (projected from the sawtooth ceiling to be 'captured' by visitors' on hand-held paper screens, or on to the floor, as a kaleidoscopic montage), interspersing scenes of everyday life and the rugged natural landscapes of each country. This persuasive juxtaposition of imagery was designed to lessen the reliance on the use of written and spoken language in this Japanese setting, and as such reiterated the legacy of the Scandinavians' successful presentations at the international and Nordic design fairs of the 1950s and 1960s.

As part of the public program for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition tour, introductory talks on aspects of Scandinavian design were given by Tarras-Wahlberg in all of the galleries and other venues, but few records exist of other talks on the exhibition content or related interpretive lectures by design professionals or curators. This is not to suggest that commentary and dialogue did not occur between visitors and in the course of discussions between students and their teachers. Free from the hushed aura of traditional art museum displays, visitors felt themselves more able to become engaged in dialogues about what they did or did not like.

¹⁸¹ The author observed this when visiting *Expo '70* in Osaka, Japan in 1970.

Apart from published reviews, the catalogue was the only substantial source of information about the exhibition. Its essay by critic and writer Ulf Hård af Segerstad covered some broad themes to engage visitors with the exhibition content. In ‘Four countries – one tradition of design’, he introduces a theme that had been first promoted in the earlier North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition: that of cultural unity between four countries. Since the formation of the Nordic Council, the propagation of the idea of such unity gave a stronger weight to the design achievements and trade efforts of four individual nations:

... The Scandinavians now present a joint exhibition of their goods, not only to show the world what kind of articles we produce, but also to reveal what kind of people we are ... this exhibition should be regarded not only as a display of different aspects of a production programme, but also as expressing a social and cultural concept as to how we should design the things around us to achieve the realisation of “the good life”.

In ‘Development under straitened conditions’, Hård af Segerstad introduced the concept of environmental determination and the interiorised culture of the home as factors in developing solutions to design problems:

... A tradition of design created under straitened conditions in a varied and sometimes harsh climate. But in this isolation, an environment developed that did not lack its own individual character. Under these circumstances, the home came to play a decisive role for the sparse and scattered population. ... the home became an obvious meeting-place in the North, and still is today. As a result of this, the home and its furnishings have received special care and attention ...

He went on to link contemporary craft and semi-industrialised applied arts production to a traditional artisan culture that had survived through the upheavals of the industrialising processes of the late nineteenth century:

Thanks to the comparatively late arrival of the industrial revolution in Scandinavia, it was possible, with the assistance of the [design] societies, to transfer a handicrafts tradition that was still essentially alive to the industries producing goods for use in the home.

Such a generalisation skimmed over the complexities of this transition and the very different effects it had on each country's economy and social matrix, even though technical progress in areas such as housing, communications, transport, power generation and self-sufficiency were common ambitions that brought forward different responses and solutions. Following with 'Beautiful articles for everyday use', he invoked Gregor Paulsson's manifesto in suggesting functionality's imperative in the social and symbolic function of the home:

... Architects and designers began [in the 1930s] systematically to study the purely practical functions of housing, furniture and household articles, especially with regard to proportions and measurements ... This attitude to purely utilitarian articles has not restricted in any way the design of decorative or artistic articles ... [which] have been able to play with complete freedom on the register of their respective materials, where form and colour are concerned.

He concluded with 'From artist to industrial designer', reinforcing a role for designers of upholding the values that had been given form through the construct of 'Scandinavian design':

... we feel that the Scandinavian designer of the future, trained as he is to make products that are not only functional and practical but also pleasant, and indeed beautiful, to the eye and touch, will be able to convey the deeply human philosophy of Scandinavian Design, even when shaping machines and equipment. If these products are to help us to achieve "the good life", they must also be visually capable of doing so.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Hård af Segerstad, op. cit., pp. 6–11.

10. Received wisdom: the reception of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition

Presentation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australia's seven capital cities over a period of a year attracted concentrated media attention. The coverage was locally generated and focused, and generally did not reflect the commentary from previous showings in other venues (reflecting a period of less media homogeneity than the present); the similarities of discussion and comment are notable. Among some sixty-seven Australian press reports on the exhibition published in newspapers and magazines during 1968 and 1969, the prevailing theme of commentary is on its effectiveness in 'educating taste' and as a 'lesson in design' for Australians.

Journalists addressed such matters in a variety of ways as the following examples demonstrate. For Perth art critic, Hillary Merrifield, the exhibition was an exemplar from what she understood were countries with fewer resources than Australia:

...It is also an exhibition from which Australians can learn a lot. If countries far smaller in size and with fewer basic resources can make and sell items of such high quality, it is time we tried to educate our people to want and accept only the best.¹⁸³

Another Perth critic, Patrick Hutchings, suggested that the Scandinavian designed objects in the exhibition suited the aspirations for functionality that Australians held but did not have to capacity to realise:

The Scandinavian can teach us a great deal if we care to learn. The functionalism is vitalistic, not formalistic, and their modulars are taken from homo domesticus and not from any rationalistic, excogitated, ideal of urban man ... Here we have a concept of design which expresses, in a sophisticated and eminently workable form, the kind of utilitarianism that we suppose ourselves to admire; these are things designed neither for conspicuous consumption, nor for people who make a bare living; they are contrived for decent, reasonable living with. How much will we choose to learn from people who have got more or less where we think we are going, a little before us? Time will tell.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ H Merrifield, 'Exhibition is perfection in design', *West Australian*, 16 February 1968.

¹⁸⁴ P Hutchings, 'Designs to live with', *Australian*, 13 March 1968.

Adelaide reviewer Elizabeth Young noted that ‘There are pointers here for our designers and lessons for our consumers.’¹⁸⁵ John Henshaw found that ‘[i]t is a good show, instructive in many ways and it could rouse at least a few of our manufacturers from their abysmal ignorance in matters of design.’¹⁸⁶ Elizabeth Hawkes suggested that ‘Perhaps the greatest lesson which Scandinavian designers can teach us is that an item of furniture, for example, can be unadorned, simple and practical in the extreme, yet still be beautiful.’¹⁸⁷

Sydney art critic, the painter James Gleeson, reported on the value of the exhibition to design students:

The Lower Court at the Art Gallery [of NSW] has become a school for designers, and students by the dozen are busily making notes. One can only hazard a guess at the effect these superb exhibitions will have on the future of design in this country. But if the lessons are properly absorbed, it can only lead to a rise in quality.¹⁸⁸

Tasmanian reviewer, Audrey Flockhart, suggested that equating functionalist and aesthetic qualities, as demonstrated by the objects in the exhibition, could be a model for the emergent Tasmanian design industry to assert itself as a part of the State’s cultural profile:

Maybe if it was generally accepted that a chair is as important as a painting (it certainly has more universal appeal), if we were aware of the inherent qualities of materials, and expected real craftsmanship, manufacturers would appreciate the need for creative industrial design – and much of the fine artist’s fruitless search for patronage would be over.

She continued by suggesting that the consumer and user of a product have a responsibility to determine the nature and type of production:

Let’s hope every consumer (everyone who sits in a chair or buys cups), every maker of things and every carpentry apprentice sees this exhibition and understands that it’s not just appearances that count, but a grass roots approach to function, material and craftsmanship. The move to establish a course in industrial design [in Tasmania]

¹⁸⁵ E Young, ‘Beauty on the kitchen shelf’, *Advertiser*, 1 April 1968.

¹⁸⁶ J Henshaw, ‘Scandinavia’s unique brew: fantasy mixed with function’, *Australian*, 20 July 1968.

¹⁸⁷ E Hawkes, ‘Artistic design of Scandinavia’, *Advertiser*, 2 April 1968.

¹⁸⁸ J Gleeson, ‘Lesson from Europe’, *Sun*, 10 July 1968.

couldn't have surfaced at a better time. Let's hope it gets further than woolly aesthetics and finds real involvement with technology.¹⁸⁹

This ambition eventually became a reality in Tasmania during the 1990s, resulting initially from initiatives of 1975, such as the establishment of the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board. Its programs of support for a Tasmanian craft and design industry focused largely on the potential of the State's unique timber resources.

Patrick Hutchings, writing for *Art and Australia*, suggested that Australians had within them the capacity to harness a hedonistic spirit to the service of design, if they could be persuaded to adopt the discipline of the Scandinavians in converting intuition into practical ends:

Australian design has a great deal to learn from this important and splendid exhibition, but there are no neat formulae, no simple receipts. It is essentially a matter of spirit and of feeling; the designer must acknowledge and use intuition and passion, and bend them to the principle of utility. In the end this approach should be congenial to Australians; humanistic hedonism, creative, economical repression of aesthetic excess ought, in the long run, to appeal to us as a nation of pragmatists. But pragmatism, like any other workable way of life, has its exacting disciplines. Artifacts do not function beautifully unless they are made to.¹⁹⁰

Jean Bruce, writing on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, reflected on the role of museums in bringing together carefully crafted and designed objects, usually encountered in the world of commerce, 'legitimising' them in the critical and educational context of the visual arts:

For some years now, many Scandinavian products have been available in Australian shops and have found their way into our lives but a comprehensive exhibition such as this one, touring Australian Galleries, no doubt, will serve to educate public taste and stimulate our own designers and manufacturers.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ A Flockart, 'Scandinavian art is functional, aesthetic', *Saturday Evening Mercury*, 31 August 1968.

¹⁹⁰ P Hutchings, 'Vikings in the Bauhaus', *Art and Australia*, vol. 6, no.1, June 1968, pp. 23–25.

¹⁹¹ J Bruce, 'She has built a career on design', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 17 March 1968.

The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition reinforced the growing acceptance of Scandinavian products already on sale in Australia. This was particularly evident in Melbourne, where an understanding of the particular spatial and material qualities (the openness of planning and the clear expression of structure and natural materials) of Scandinavian design could be seen in the architectural work of Robin Boyd and Roy Grounds, as well as in the prolific output of a number of factories producing Scandinavian-inspired furniture. In his review of the exhibition, art critic Patrick McCaughey reminded his readers of this long period of infiltration of Scandinavian design in Australia, although he failed to comment on any influence of it on the emergent Australian studio crafts movement of the time:

Just how securely the Scandinavians have become the arbiters and makers of domestic taste can be seen from the large exhibition, *Design in Scandinavia*, at the National Gallery of Victoria. What's so interesting is the discovery that while much of it is good, how little of it is surprising, indicating the success of Scandinavian infiltration ...

He refers to the 'naturalness' of many of the exhibits and their relationship to the persistence of strong craft traditions in the Nordic countries.

What distinguishes the Scandinavian product is the pure pleasure the humblest knife and fork or the simplest salt and pepper shaker can give the user. Although the majority of exhibits are the result of a sophisticated technology, they exude a totally nontechnological feeling. Whereas a Bauhaus chair tells you firmly and proudly of its production line history, the Scandinavian furniture on view suggests a human naturalness ... The Scandinavian designers' capacity to harness technology without becoming chillingly clinical represents one of their major coups. It points to the long and honourable craft tradition from which their post-war designers spring.¹⁹²

Another Melbourne reviewer, Alan McCulloch, discussed these qualities:

In Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland design is a major industry. All these countries are light in raw materials, so the aim of attaining perfect proportions, colour and finish, in even the most simple handmade or manufactured objects, extends from the peasant's cottage to the highest realms of national promotion. In no other countries are aesthetic and utilitarian aims so exquisitely balanced ... The key to Scandinavian

¹⁹² P McCaughey, 'Scandinavian naturalness', *Age*, 12 October 1968. Patrick McCaughey later became the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

excellence in design, it appears, is simplicity allied to respect for the organic nature of the materials to be used ... if you want to draw an interesting stylistic analogy and test the strength of Nordic influence, compare a Danish stainless steel bowl or chafing-dish with the shells of the Sydney Opera House.¹⁹³

Other reviewers commented on the role of art museums in presenting contemporary design. Graham Gambie's previously mentioned article, 'Scandinavia's pots and pans art exhibition' addressed concerns about the encroachment of applied arts and industrial design into institutions mainly dedicated to the display of painting and historical artefacts:

The inevitable, "What's all this stuff doing in an Art Gallery," has started already ... [Hal Missingham's] purpose was to "show that in fact art permeates the whole of society."¹⁹⁴

Such remarks and observations did not come from those known specifically as design commentators, although twelve reviews were from art critics. The opinions of those who might have been expected to comment on the exhibition from a designer's point of view were not aired either in the newspapers or in the popular or professional design and architecture journals. Lack of commentary in *Architecture in Australia* is puzzling, given that journal's interest in current design issues and its regular reviews of craft exhibitions and State gallery exhibitions during the 1960s, and the added architectural interest of the role in the design of the exhibition by Nurmesniemi, a noted Finnish architect. This may have been a result of bad timing: Max Dupain's fine documentary photographs of the exhibition, commissioned late in the tour, may have not been available in time for an article to be published during the tour.¹⁹⁵ Nor were there articles on the exhibition in popular home magazines such as *Home Beautiful* or *Australian House and Garden*, although the *Australian Women's Weekly* carried an article about the exhibition's Secretary General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ A McCulloch, 'Emphasis on Nordic craft', *Herald*, Melbourne, 9 October 1968.

¹⁹⁴ G Gambie, op. cit.

¹⁹⁵ Ongoing promotion of the tour's success was curtailed as a result of the Svenska Slöjdföreningen's financial and structural difficulties from 1969. In correspondence with the author, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg stated that the organisation's focus had to shift to solving immediate problems in Sweden and that the potential to build upon *Design in Scandinavia's* Australian success was not able to be activated.

¹⁹⁶ Bruce, op. cit., n.p.

That the final result of newspaper coverage was assiduously recorded in the exhibition report as a total of seventy-nine columns plus 24.5 whole newspaper pages of special exhibition supplements, suggests that the target was daily newspaper coverage, rather than (relatively) limited journal coverage.¹⁹⁷ Radio and television coverage was also recorded in the report as 161.5 minutes (radio) and 108.5 minutes (television), again reinforcing the value given to immediacy and currency by the organisers.

The official reporting of the exhibition in its countries of origin appears to have been confined to the design circles and government agencies that commissioned the project.¹⁹⁸ Press commentary seems to have been limited to a series of nine similar articles on the exhibition, focusing on the roles of Gummerus and Nurmesniemi, which appeared in syndicated Finnish newspapers on 3 and 4 April 1968,¹⁹⁹ and a short article, which appeared in the Swedish Society of Craft and Design's journal, *Form*, announcing the success of the exhibition.²⁰⁰

The Norwegian researcher, Ingeborg Glambek, has investigated the reception of the 1954–1957 North American *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in two works: *Det Nordiske i arkitektur og design sett utenfra* (*The Nordic in architecture and design as seen from abroad*),²⁰¹ and 'Scandinavian design – en kortvarig affære? (Scandinavian design: A short-lived affair?)'.²⁰² Although they are written in Norwegian, her texts indicated to me that the reportage of the reception of the exhibition in America was manipulated by its organisers in order to present the best outcome in terms of propaganda, further international promotion of Scandinavian design and, ultimately, increased sales of Scandinavian-designed and produced goods. This was borne out in a subsequent conversation with the author in Oslo, during which she expanded on her thesis that propaganda about design supremacy was a key element in many major Scandinavian projects abroad.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ Tarras-Wahlberg, *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁸ The Swedish Society of Craft and Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*), which commissioned the final report, distributed it to all parties involved in the project, as well as to design libraries in Scandinavia.

¹⁹⁹ There was widespread reporting in Finland about the exhibition. For example, from 3–5 April 1968, fourteen syndicated articles, focused on the roles of H Olof Gummerus and Antti Nurmesniemi on their visit to Australia for the exhibition, appeared in Finnish metropolitan and regional newspapers.

²⁰⁰ 'Formrevy: Design in Scandinavia', *Form*, 7 1968, p. 56.

²⁰¹ I Glambek, *Det Nordiske i arkitektur og design sett utenfra*, Norsk Arkitekturforlag, Oslo, 1997.

²⁰² I Glambek, 'Scandinavian design: en kortvarig affære?', in W Halén (ed.), *Art Deco funkis: Scandinavian design*, Orfeus Forlag, Oslo, 1996, pp. 74–79.

²⁰³ Conversation between Ingeborg Glambek and the author, Oslo, 9 November 1999.

In editorial style and structure, the final report on the North American tour was the model for the final report on the Australian event. Each was distributed to the projects' stakeholders and has remained in design libraries in the USA, Canada, Australia and Scandinavia, backed up by more extensive exhibition project archives in Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Both reports included montages and full copies of reviews from journal and newspapers, along with montages of related advertisements and promotional material, supported by statistical material on visitor numbers and quantity of media. Glambek asserts that this method of assembling and presenting such material resulted in an impression of intense and time-concentrated coverage of the exhibition, when in fact the incidence of reportage was sparse and limited to marginal sections of newspapers such as 'women's interest' pages, and seldom gave any sense of the wider cultural context in which the exhibition was received.

To sustain concentrated, high-level media coverage and commentary over the three-year period of the exhibition's North American tour would have been impossible.

The shorter exposure of *Design in Scandinavia* during its twelve-month Australian tour of only seven venues, and the fact that it had to be re-presented in the differing media environments of each Australian capital, did allow it to avoid the American experience of lessening media attention due to over-exposure. Few Australians would have seen reportage from cities other than their own, and their acceptance of the exhibition as a didactic and comparative device, designed in part to stimulate Australian design, allowed many to formulate their own opinions, relatively unswayed by critics and media reports.²⁰⁴



Fig. 31
The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, October 1968

²⁰⁴ In most Australian cities in 1968, newspapers from other cities were not widely available, other than in public libraries.

The success and international influence of *Design in Scandinavia*'s precursors had given its organisers the confidence to propose an exhibition to stimulate Scandinavian exports in a country that few of them had visited and about which they knew little. Shaping such a project was an act of faith from both proposers and receivers and relied on the intelligence and diplomacy of committed agents in developing new strategies for keeping the project alive in the face of financial difficulties and wavering commitment from the participating Australian organisations.

The exhibition's arrival in 1968 encouraged discussion on the nature of production and the changing role for design as an expression of cultural value, rather than merely a servant of the process production and consumption. As a demonstration of the production of countries where design had been supported through the twentieth century, the exhibition, and the values it represented, offered Australians a glimpse of what might be achieved with similar support for design and craft practitioners.

The exhibition's presentation and reception in Perth was a critical spur for the Western Australian Art Gallery's future development. By raising the subject of design in a venue that was severely inadequate in its design, the Gallery used the exhibition as a political lever to urge the Western Australian Government to move forward with its plans for a new building.

The design and presentation of the exhibition, and the quality and quantity of the works it contained, stimulated an unprecedented amount of media commentary on the subject of design and the implications for Australian practices if the Scandinavian model was studied and adopted. The exhibition's architectonic rhetoric was translated as a lesson for designers and educators, which, if studied and implemented, would deliver benefits to Australian culture and commerce. The implications of this proposition are discussed in Part Two.

Part Two

Creating a culture of comparison

...in these remote countries a powerful art movement is forcing its way into the general art development of Europe and...it will undoubtedly ere long, claim greater public attention.

-Review of the Paris Exposition Universelle,
The Studio, 1901²⁰⁵

The reasons for the successful presentation and influence of the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, and the associated marketing strategies of its organisers and promoters, are numerous. In order to understand these reasons, it is necessary to briefly examine some aspects of the development of modern design in the Scandinavian countries– Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland– that set the ground for the successful penetration of the Australian market by those countries' manufacturers.²⁰⁶

Part 2 will examine how the design movements of the late nineteenth century, such as the Arts and Crafts Movement and Jugendstil began to coalesce with the prevailing mood of National Romanticism in Scandinavia to present a new type of design to the world. Through exhibitions, publications and the promotional strategies of the region's newly-formed design associations, the disciplines of the crafts and the demonstration of their rigorous application to an emergent design industry in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland began to create new markets for Scandinavian products domestically and internationally. The concept of the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition had grown directly from these earlier promotions and represented the continuity of purpose that has characterised Nordic design activity throughout the twentieth century.

I will show how the Scandinavian approach to design was initially mediated for Australians through Britain, and how it was used as an exemplar for Australia's emergent design industries. The role of individuals is also examined, showing how commercial agents, entrepreneurs, exhibition organisers and diplomatic representatives worked to propagate Scandinavian design as an appropriate model for Australian practice.

²⁰⁵ S Frykholm, 'Round the exhibition: V: Scandinavian decorative art', *The Studio*, vol. 21, pp. 190–199.

²⁰⁶ Design developments in Iceland have been excluded from this study, as these occurred to a larger extent later in the twentieth century and beyond the date scope of this thesis.

11. From National Romanticism to Functionalism: the emergence of modern design in Scandinavia 1890-1945

By the 1880s, the geographic region, now known generally as Scandinavia, encompassing Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, had begun to assert a distinctive cultural identity within the world that was beginning to emerge as modern Europe. The term ‘Scandia’ or ‘Scandinavia’ was first applied to the remoter regions of northern Europe in the works of Pliny the Elder, the Roman geographer, in the first century CE. By the Middle Ages, it came to include Jutland, bringing Sweden, Denmark and Norway under this term. Common Nordic social policy and legislation had its beginnings in the mid-1840s, leading to an emphasis on the expression of a shared Nordic cultural heritage across the region. Finland had been governed by Sweden for about six hundred years before becoming a Grand Duchy of Russia in 1809. It became an independent democratic republic in 1917, and began to participate fully as a Nordic nation with its post-war move away from Soviet influence in the late 1940s. While it is not technically a part of Scandinavia, Finland has become identified as such, within (among other shared cultural objectives) the pervasive cultural and commercial construct of ‘Scandinavian design’.²⁰⁷

Today, the Nordic countries and the states of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands comprise what is known as ‘Scandinavia’. Within them, this group is known as ‘Norden’, a term little used outside the region. Its variety of ethnic cultural traditions, political histories, its native resources and its long history of art and craft began to shape the region’s responses to the encroachment of industrialisation, modernisation and social reform.

The region’s physical isolation from continental Europe, its internal geographic divisions and the physical demands of its climate on its people had for centuries engendered a strong practical and utilitarian character in its arts. A home-centred culture, developed since the period of the Vikings (850–1150 CE) to sustain family and community in harsh and isolated areas, was enriched through the region’s strong oral and literary traditions. Nineteenth century Romanticism drew from the extensive, re-discovered Nordic literature of the previous two centuries and informed the revival of traditional arts of the entire region, a movement further stimulated by archaeological

²⁰⁷ H Hawkins, ‘Finding a place in a new world order: Finland, America, and the “Design in Scandinavia” exhibition of 1954–57’, in Aav & Stritzler-Levine, op. cit., pp. 239–241.

discoveries and excavations of Viking settlements and burial sites in the region. Based on ancient sources, such as the thirteenth century royal and Icelandic sagas and the later heroic sagas, regional variations of this Nordic imagery found expression as the nineteenth century 'Old Nordic' (or 'Old Norse'), 'Viking Revival' and 'Dragon' styles in the decorative and applied arts across Scandinavia.²⁰⁸ The development of national museums in the region and the subsequent systematic documentation and display of recently excavated historical objects engendered national pride and provided a rich source of inspirational material for designers and artists.

Politically, each of the Scandinavian countries at the end of the nineteenth century had evolved through periods of submission to and dominance of each other as well as from outside the region. From 1814, following a period of close ties with Denmark, Norway became a subordinate partner in a union with Sweden until 1905. Denmark had lost its southern territories of Schleswig and Holstein to Germany as a result of the wars of 1863–64.²⁰⁹ Despite such a history of conflict, the emergent Scandinavia of the late nineteenth century had embraced the value of cultural unity and laid a fertile ground for the acceptance of the social democratic policies of the modern Scandinavian states.²¹⁰

The region's history was a compelling force in the quest for independence in each of its countries as Europe's cultural and political matrix began to disintegrate at the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s, a resurgence of nationalism in Finland and Norway, respectively under Russian and Swedish domination, was given form by their writers, painters, architects, crafts practitioners and designers. In Norwegian design and decorative arts, this expression of nationalism was known as the Viking revival style (also known as the Dragon style or Old Nordic style). It developed from the interest in Nordic mythology, first articulated in the work of early nineteenth century writers and

²⁰⁸ The development of these styles is discussed in E Stavenow-Hidemark, 'Viking revival and art nouveau: Traditions of excellence', in D Revere McFadden (ed.), *Scandinavian modern design 1880–1980*, Harry N Abrams, New York, 1982, pp. 47–55.

²⁰⁹ One result of this, with significant relevance to the development of the crafts in Australia, was the emigration of a number of Danes, including the silversmith, Jochim Matthias Wendt (Denmark 1830–1917), from Schleswig-Holstein, who arrived in Adelaide in 1854, becoming South Australia's leading silversmith and jeweller and a central figure in the development of Australian silversmithing. Danish-born emigrant jewellers working in the mid-nineteenth century in Sydney included Julius Hogarth (arrived Australia 1852 as Julius Haugaard), Conrad Erichsen (1842–1903) and Christian Ludwig Qwist (1818–1877). For a fuller context of the work of these silversmiths see JB Hawkins, *Nineteenth century Australian silver*, Antique Collectors Club, vols 1 & 2, London, 1990.

²¹⁰ For a general history of the development of the Scandinavian states see J Mjöberg, 'Romanticism and revival', *The Northern world: The history and heritage of Northern Europe AD400–1100*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1980.

scholars and fired by interest generated from archaeological excavations of ancient Norwegian ship burial sites in Tune in 1867 and Gokstad in 1880.

Its manifestation in Finland, *Karelianism*, was spurred in the 1890s by resistance to the increasing Russian suppression (or ‘Russification’) of the native Finnish language and customs. The wild forests and traditional arts and architecture of Karelia, the eastern province of Finland (along with its major city, Viipuri, bitterly ceded to the Soviet Union in the armistice of 1944 and now part of Russia) attracted pilgrimages and inspired artistic interpretations in the work of many younger artists and architects. The region was the source of the folk poems collected and first published by Elias Lönnrot in 1835 as the national epic, the *Kalevala*.²¹¹

Among those whose imagination was fired by Karelianism and also inspired by the ideology of the then current British Arts and Crafts Movement was the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950), who, with partners Armas Lindgren (1874–1925) and Herman Gesellius (1874–1916), designed the compound of houses and studios near Helsinki, named *Hvitträsk* (White Lake) in 1902.²¹² *Hvitträsk*’s architectural features derive from historic and contemporary sources: its large, log-walled living area evokes the central room of the traditional Karelian farm house while its massing and detailing show the prevailing influence of contemporary English architects and designers. In this structure there are influences of CFA Voysey, RN Shaw and MH Baillie Scott, combined with elements from the American Shingle Style of houses of the 1880s. Yet *Hvitträsk* embodied the concept of the home as a work of art and, with its imaginative interpretation of Karelian design themes, became an enduring symbol of national pride.²¹³

²¹¹ The Finnish physician, Elias Lönnrot, collected Karelian rural folk songs and poetry, transcribing them and connecting them through his own writing into the heroic epic of the *Kalevala*, published in its entirety in 1849. The epic roused interest in Finland and in continental Europe drew attention to the region’s previously obscure indigenous history. T Mäkelä, *Architecture and modern identity in Finland*, in Aav & Stritzler-Levine, op. cit., pp. 53, 75. For a broader discussion of Finnish architecture during this period see R Wäre, ‘How nationalism was expressed in Finnish architecture at the turn of the last century’, in N Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the national dream*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 1993, pp. 169–180.

²¹² See further discussion on Eliel Saarinen on pp. 121–124.

²¹³ The history of *Hvitträsk* is discussed in T Valto, *Hvitträsk: The home as a work of art*, Otava, Helsinki, 1993.

According to Taisto Mäkelä, writing on the emergence of Karelianism as an intrinsic part of Finnish National Romanticism:

The real value of Karelianism lay in supplying the required raw material, however problematic, for sustaining a myth of origins around which a contemporary cultural identity could be fabricated.²¹⁴

The reinforcement of the uniqueness and power of historical design at this time of change was critical to the evolution of the handcraft traditions of self-sufficient agricultural communities in Scandinavia. Looking to their past for examples of successful and relevant design that could be reinterpreted for the present allowed a continuing relationship to needs that helped radical design relate to the Scandinavians' sense of their own identity.

Scandinavia's geographic isolation from the larger urban centres of continental Europe and a renewed confidence in its handcraft traditions resulting from the nationalist mood of the period helped to soften the inevitable impact of industrialisation in the region. The industrial expansion brought about by the use of electricity, the railroads, and steam power had already decimated the rural craft-based economies of Britain and its effects were well known and heeded in Scandinavia, and particularly in Sweden. Less driven than Britain by export economies and the consumer demands of a rising middle class aspiring to the style of the aristocracy, Sweden's confidence in the appropriateness of its functionalist design traditions allowed mass production methods to deliver their promise: to make maximum use of raw materials through economical and efficient manufacturing methods.²¹⁵ Thus, towns which had developed around a particular community's skills or the proximity of raw materials (for example, clays, wood, silica and water power) were able to integrate industrial production and handcraft skills relatively smoothly without wholesale loss of those skills to the cities, as happened in Britain.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 and its aftermath created an economic upswing that was felt through the countries of Scandinavia. A demand for wood products in

²¹⁴ Mäkelä, op. cit., p. 75.

²¹⁵ D Hagströmer, 'Design reform and the rediscovery of history', *Swedish design*, The Swedish Institute, Stockholm, 1998, pp. 37–38.

continental Europe and Russia, for instance, gave Finland the opportunity to capitalise on its forests and sawmills (and the necessary supporting infrastructure of railways, factories and so on). Supported by foreign investment, these strategies changed the face of the Finnish landscape. This export industry created wealth and a move away from the self-sufficiency of the native populations in the forest regions. The side effect of deforestation was an abundance of timber by-product that, literally, fuelled the development of the glassmaking workshops and factories that were to become a strong part of Finland's applied arts industries.

As happened in Britain in the early nineteenth century, the newly enlisted labour force in these industries, drawn from displaced rural workers, was targeted by design reformers. In Finland, the *Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistys* (*Konstflitföreningen* in Swedish; Society of Crafts and Design), founded in 1875, organised lectures and workshops by experts on design and crafts to factory workers as a stimulus to self-improvement and to educate taste. The organisation's efforts and the support it gained from the craft workforce led later to the formalisation of training through the establishment of schools of applied arts in Finland.²¹⁶

The need to nurture craft skills in the face of this change was nonetheless critical and led to the formation of design reform associations that would promote design as part of the agendas for national identity and independence. The world's oldest such association, the *Svenska Slöjdföreningen* (Society of Arts and Crafts)²¹⁷ was formed in 1845 with aims 'to bring about improvements in the products of Swedish handicraft and industry through co-operation with artistic forces, better the household culture, and work to raise the general level of taste.'²¹⁸ Like its Finnish counterpart, this organisation was active in craft and design training and the founding of applied arts schools.

Other similar organisations followed: the *Landsforeningen Dansk Brugskunst og Design* (Society of Applied Art and Industrial Design) in Denmark in 1907 and the *Föreningen Brukskunst* (Society of Applied Arts) in Norway in 1918.²¹⁹ All had similar aims: to

²¹⁶ Kruskopf, 'Social dreams and hard truths', op. cit., p. 34.

²¹⁷ The organisation had a number of name changes: by the mid-1950s it had become known (in English) as the Swedish Society of Industrial Design; by the 1960s as the Swedish Society for Industrial Design; and in 1976 it was re-named Svensk Form (translated as Swedish Society of Craft and Design).

²¹⁸ U Hård af Segerstad, 'Good everyday wares', *Scandinavian design*, Studio Books, London, 1961 (Eng. ed.), p. 14. Hård af Segerstad was editor of the Svenska Slöjdföreningen journal, *Form*.

²¹⁹ McFadden, op. cit., p. 91.

foster cultural consciousness, improved living conditions and a democratic access to good design and its perceived benefits. The shared goals of these organisations began to shape a unified ‘Scandinavian’ identity that would be harnessed as a powerful marketing tool for all four countries early in the twentieth century.

These associations were less remedial in their intention than was the case with similar organisations in Britain. The British Government had established art and design schools in the 1840s to counter a perceived rampant debasement of taste and skill resulting from industrialisation and the mass production of objects for the emergent middle class and a developing export market. Concurrent with this was the development of the Arts and Crafts Movement, seeking to ennoble production by eschewing mechanisation and drawing design inspiration from the art and architecture of Britain’s medieval period and from its vernacular building and craft traditions. While immensely successful in re-educating a generation of designers and crafts practitioners in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a movement its rejection of an industrial ethic predestined its eclipse by 1900. Its focus on craft however was a beacon for the emergent design movement in all of the Scandinavian countries, its medievalism striking a chord with the prevailing mood of national romanticism and historical revival. Craft organisations, such as Sweden’s Friends of Handicraft (founded in 1874), orchestrated this rising interest into training and the preservation of handcraft traditions.

By the 1890s the pervasive influence of the continental European design style known as Art Nouveau (and its stylistic variants, such as *Jugendstil* in the Germanic countries, *Secession* in Austria and *Stile Liberty* in Italy) had begun to be felt in architecture, design and the applied arts. Sweden, in particular, which through the late eighteenth and nineteenth century had imitated or reinterpreted a number of revival styles popular in France, saw in Art Nouveau a means for the expression of modernity and national character. The style’s dominant leitmotiv, the expression of nature through unified and organic design, suited the fin-de-siècle Scandinavian mood. Its Swedish form, known as *Jugend*, gave designers a new and effective way to interpret indigenous themes, historical narrative, native flora and fauna and traditional craft skills in the service of nationalism.²²⁰

²²⁰ *Jugendstil* derived from the German *Jugend* (Youth) movement. Its adoption as a design term in Sweden came about because German was the first foreign language to be taught in Swedish schools. From 1909, the *Deutscher Werkbund*, the successful German model of design for industry exerted a

Art Nouveau's origins in France had grown in part from a backlash to the increasing influence by the 1880s of the 'new' (emancipated) woman in the non-domestic sphere, the style's proponents re-placing her image at the centre of a newly eroticised and interiorised world of artistic pursuits centred on the home.²²¹ Scandinavia's climate, in particular its long winters, had long influenced the development of a home-centred and craft-based, interiorised culture which was receptive to Art Nouveau's design themes and organic unity, although responding less to its agenda of eroticism, which remained a continental obsession within the movement.

The widespread dissemination of the ideals and the achievements of the Arts and Crafts Movement and Art Nouveau through the English periodical, *The Studio* (published from 1893), was notable throughout Scandinavia.²²² Through numerous articles, the journal showed its readers how these styles could successfully accommodate regional variations (for example, in the geometric design schematics of the Vienna Secession in Austria and *Jugendstil* in Germany) that gave vivid expression to ethnic and nationalist leanings in other countries seeking to break free from imperialist power and culture.²²³

The Studio was also read keenly at this time by those in the arts in places such as Australia, where direct access to the achievements of these new art and design movements was at best difficult.²²⁴ Its availability also coincided with a period of nationalism in Australia leading up to, and beyond Federation in 1901. The journal's content and illustrations of new approaches to design were a source of inspiration for artists seeking to express an independent Australian identity through the imagery of the country's unique flora and fauna. This parallel development of ideas was occurring in places as opposite and as relatively unknown to each other as the countries of Scandinavia and Australia. It marks a point of connection for Australians to a particular

strong influence on Swedish design, leading by the mid-1920s to a rejection of decorative design in favour of functionalism.

²²¹ For a detailed analysis of the role and depiction of women within the art nouveau movement, see D Silverman, *Art nouveau in fin-de-siècle France*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992.

²²² The painters Carl and Karin Larsson and writer, Ellen Key, were known to be subscribers to *The Studio*.

²²³ For an assessment of aspects of romanticism in art, architecture and design of this period, in several European countries, see N Gordon Bowe, op. cit.

²²⁴ In Perth for example, *The Studio* was received by the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery from 1900 and by Perth Technical College from the first decade of the twentieth century.

Scandinavian approach to the interpretation of nature (and through it, national identity) through the craft and design that grew out of the ferment of the 1890s.²²⁵

The influence of Asian art also informed the work of Swedish, Finnish and Danish designers at this time, through the dissemination of the ideals and achievements of the Aesthetic Movement in Britain and the United States of America, and *Japonisme* in France.²²⁶ The trading relationship with Asia had a long history in Denmark as the Danish Crown had actively collaborated with Copenhagen merchants from the early seventeenth century when the first Danish East India Company established a factory in Canton as a base for trade with China.²²⁷ Incoming cargoes consisted mainly of tea and textiles, with sales aimed at a growing middle class.²²⁸ Although the Company was dissolved in 1843, such Danish colonial interests in Asia influenced the subsequent development of important collections of East Asian art (particularly from China and Japan) in its museums through the nineteenth century. These collections provided Danish designers and crafts practitioners with direct access to objects that would be reinterpreted in the Art Nouveau and Japonisme style porcelain production of firms such as Bing and Grøndahl²²⁹ and, in Sweden, Rörstrand.²³⁰ The direct reference to Japanese decorating techniques in their and other firms' work was to fade but would be replaced with a more enduring and influential understanding of the power of nature in the design and construction of objects that is central to Japanese craft.

While Art Nouveau (in its Nordic variants of *Jugend* and, in Denmark, *Skønvirke*) had provided a platform for the successful interpretation of nationalism and regional expression across Scandinavia, it was a style that by the early 1900s was beginning to reflect the excesses of the century that had just passed. It was in the work of Herman

²²⁵ R Bell, *Nature as object: Craft and design from Japan, Finland and Australia*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1998, pp. 6–11.

²²⁶ For a Finnish perspective on the influence of Japanese design in Scandinavian art in this period see H Kalha, 'Modern eclecticism or aesthetic kinship? Reflections on 20th century Japan inspiration', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 4, 1994, pp. 15–26.

²²⁷ The Danish East India Company, founded by Danish King Christian IV in 1616, set up the colony of Tranquebar on India's Coromandel coast. Trade continued there with the establishment (by King Christian VI) in 1732 of a second joint-stock company, *Det Kongelige Okrojerede Danske Asiatiske Compagni* (The Royal Chartered Danish Asiatic Company).

²²⁸ The history of the company is discussed in O Feldbæk, 'The Danish Asiatic Company', in G Anders, JFA Holck Kolding & K Kjølens (eds), *Asiatisk Plads*, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, 1980, pp. 7–32.

²²⁹ Bing & Grøndahl was established in 1853 and taken over by the Royal Copenhagen porcelain factory in 1987, which since 1997 has been part of the Royal Scandinavia company.

²³⁰ Sweden's own Asian trading company, the Swedish East India Company, had been founded in 1731. The Rörstrand ceramic company's *Ostindia* table ware, produced from 1931, was a popular homage to the Swedish East India Company.

Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen that the elements of rational modernism began to emerge, influencing the production of domestic objects informed by a new set of functionalist values. In Finland, the Iris industrial arts factory, founded in Porvoo in 1897 by the Swedish designer Louis Sparre (1863–1964), was the first to offer a range of furniture and ceramics in a resolutely modern style owing no debt to the mainstream stylistic language of Art Nouveau, or its northern European and Germanic variant, *Jugendstil*.²³¹

The Finnish journal, *Ateneum* (published from 1893 to 1903), disseminated the new architecture and design through articles by a regular contributor, the architect and critic Gustav Strengell, who was the curator of the Society of Crafts and Design's Ateneum Museum in Helsinki from 1911 to 1918. With his architect colleague, Dr Sigurd Frosterus, they were active spokesmen for the trend of rational design in Finland from around 1893 to 1903. In a 1901 special edition devoted to architecture, Strengell discussed his views on functionalism:

A building should not be composed from the facade inwards, but from the inside outwards, so that the facade is an expression of the space within. And this space should be laid out primarily with a view to its function, living space offering a pleasant and comfortable milieu. Objects should be shaped so they are pleasant to use. A chair is beautiful only if it is comfortable to sit in. But the rooms and the things themselves do not need to be dreary for this reason. Decoration should be sparing, forms simple - colour will give life.²³²

While poor sales led to the Iris factory's closure in 1904, the new aesthetic consciousness that it, and similar earlier ventures in Sweden and Norway, had raised continued to inform social education policies throughout Scandinavia. The increasing suburbanisation of its cities and the rising expectations of an urbanised working class fuelled debates about the social value of a well-designed environment and the benefits to the health and well-being of its users.

In Finland in 1900, the *Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistys* (Society of Crafts and Design) had arranged the first of a series of competitions for the design of furniture and furnishings for the working class home. These encouraged debate about design reform

²³¹ Kruskopf, 'The struggle for national profile', op. cit., p. 44.

²³² Kruskopf, 'Political unrest, active culture', op. cit., pp. 49–50.

and the critical relationship that art and design could play in the development of new manufacturing industries in Scandinavia.²³³

The urgency for this development was spurred by the success and continental dominance of German design in the 1907–1914 period as a result of the foundation of the German artistic and production association, the *Deutscher Werkbund*. While drawing from the aesthetic principles of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, the *Werkbund* had different objectives as it sought to integrate craft skills and values, and contemporary design with the economies of large-scale industrial production. These principles were applied to a wide range of goods and household appliances (many of which by then were electrically powered) produced in many manufacturing centres in Germany. Their importation and acceptance in Sweden, the first of the Scandinavian countries to embrace the ideals of the *Werkbund*,²³⁴ accelerated throughout Scandinavia the debate on functionalism and the central role that it should play in the design and aesthetics of the ordinary domestic environment and the equipment within it.²³⁵

Orchestrating these debates were the craft and design associations in each of the Scandinavian countries, by then unified in their objectives of promoting cooperation between artists and designers, consumers and manufacturers.

The results of this revival formed the content of exhibitions of Nordic art and industry, such as the *Nordic Exhibition of Industry and Art*, held in Copenhagen in 1888. Such was the interest in promoting Scandinavian culture that exhibits from Denmark, Sweden and Norway were increasingly included in international expositions, some as far away as Australia. In the 1888–1889 *Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne*, Sweden and Norway mounted exhibits, which received some acclaim. The *Age* newspaper reported that:

The Scandinavian exhibits are both interesting and numerous, and it is satisfactory to know that they have won many valuable prizes, and have in almost every instance commanded the admiration of the jurors. Mr. Parelus, the local agent for many firms in Norway and Sweden, has been especially successful ... Mr. Parelus, who could himself

²³³ *ibid.*, p. 51.

²³⁴ The German architect, educator and critic, Hermann Muthesius, who was a founding member of the *Deutscher Werkbund* in 1907, was also elected an honorary member of the *Svesnka Slöjdföreningen*.

²³⁵ The development of industrial design in Sweden, as it related to the domestic environment, is discussed more fully in C Robach, 'Design for modern people', in C Widenheim (ed.), *Utopia and reality: Modernity in Sweden 1900–1960*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2002, pp. 191–196.

have filled a large court, was obliged to make the best use of the space allowed ... The exhibits...embraced several very admirable paintings, one, a setting sun peculiar to northern latitudes, being greatly admired. There are also shown pianos and harmoniums, manufactured by B. Hals, of Christiana, Norway, together with specimens of stationery, bookbinding, painting and drawing materials, artists' colors and brown wrapping paper, well worthy of notice...

The reporter goes on to comment on a group of furniture that perhaps gave a clue to the importance placed on utility by Swedish manufacturers:

...In the section devoted to furniture and accessories there are shown some splendid specimens of cutlery, but the furniture shown is of inferior merit, and of a class altogether unsuitable for such an exhibition, being only calculated to illustrate the household gods [goods] of the poorer classes of the population.²³⁶

While I have not found visual evidence of the exhibits referred to in this report, the furniture described as being for the 'poorer classes' could have been examples of the simpler furniture for the average home that had grown from a developing concern for a more hygienic domestic environment. This class of object had begun to interest Swedish designers since the introduction of design training to the curriculum of the Stockholm School of Technology, following its re-naming in 1878.²³⁷ Many Australians, having embraced the stylistic excesses of Victorian historicist design, and not yet trained to appreciate the emerging, simpler styles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, may have misinterpreted such functionalist objects as decoratively impoverished.²³⁸

²³⁶ 'Sweden and Norway', *Age*, 29 January 1889, p. 9.

²³⁷ The School had been founded in 1844, becoming the *Slöjdföreningens skola* in 1846, the Stockholm School of Technology in 1878 and *Konstfackskolan* in 1946.

²³⁸ Evidence of Australian taste in domestic interiors is demonstrated in numerous illustrations from the period of the 1888–1889 *Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne* in T Lane & J Searle, *Australians at home: A documentary history of Australian domestic interiors from 1788 to 1914*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990.

12. Beauty for all: creating an international market for Scandinavian design

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Scandinavian design associations that had so successfully harnessed nationalism to contemporary art and design became the front-line mechanism to reflect this back to Europe and the rest of the world. Their first successful showcase was at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, focused particularly around the powerful, stylised geometric design of the Finnish pavilion designed by the architectural partnership of Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen. Reported and illustrated in *The Studio*, the pavilion and its display of the products of Finland's leading designers and artists became the focus of international attention.²³⁹ In contrast to the sometimes seething excesses of continental Art Nouveau, the Scandinavian variants of this organic style offered restraint and ordered poetry, a reliance on the qualities of natural materials and colours and design motifs reflective of the Nordic landscape, the diversity of its flora and fauna and the exoticism of its indigenous cultural traditions.

The international promotion of design as a valuable cultural export was an important factor in the Scandinavian governments' individual and collective entries into new markets it had identified in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. This occurred in the early twentieth century through the medium of the international exhibition and proved to be a highly effective strategy in bringing industrially produced goods into the realm of art and culture, and then, validated and enhanced through this process, on into the commercial marketplace.

The Scandinavian countries were not the only ones using the international cultural and design arena to promote their manufactures in the post-WWII period. A major example of this strategy was the 1951 *Festival of Britain*, designed as a national morale-booster and a strategy to revitalise post-war British manufacturing in the context of a popular cultural fair. While this event was presented only in London, its role in stimulating British industrial design had far-reaching implications and impact in the countries of the Commonwealth, with their dependencies on British imports and, in Australia, a Government policy of British preference in imports.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ T Grubhofer, 'Some sketches of the Paris Exhibition, 1900', *The Studio*, vol 20, p. 218.

²⁴⁰ 'Membership of the Commonwealth System of Imperial Preferences and the sterling block skewed Australia's flow of trade and investment towards Britain. In 1950, Britain was Australia's leading source of imports and investment and the largest export market ... [t]he scrapping of Imperial preferences, the move to convertibility of the Australian currency, the development of Australia's mineral resources, as

The success of the Scandinavian countries' promotional ventures success lay with their architectural presentations of highly-developed domestic objects, poetic with craft values yet stressing the rational and functional, and serving as the 'door opener' for trade involving heavier industry and industrial-scale manufactures. Thus a Swedish glass vase, for example, was Sweden's official gift to Australia on the opening of Parliament House in Canberra in 1927. Commissioned by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, in its airy fragility it remains on permanent display, with other countries' official gifts to the Australian Government, in Parliament House in Canberra as an eloquent, inanimate ambassador. This elegant object was received in advance of the considerable impact of the Swedish heavy machinery and precision industrial equipment for mining and transport that would follow through as major Australian imports in the mid-twentieth century.²⁴¹

The 1930s saw the rise of the Scandinavian interpretation of modernism as an international influence in architecture, interior design, product design and industrialised craft-based production. Its successful models for the integration of craft skills and values with the industrial process elevated the role of the designer as a key contributor to the functionalist design principles that characterised Scandinavian production in all materials. The Scandinavian construct of modernism incorporates a positive influence of provincialism and a creative interpretation of periphery, a subject that also links Australia with this idea.²⁴²

The first international impact of this philosophy came with the Stockholm Exhibition (*Stockholmsutställningen*) of 1930, when its theme of 'the ideal home for everybody' was reported widely in architectural and building journals and home magazines, including those in Australia. A Perth article offers an example:

"The ideal home for everybody" has become the slogan adopted by the prospective exhibitors. To achieve this ideal one trend is outstanding in th[e] direction of mass production of staple articles that are bright, pleasing and artistic as well as labour saving

well as Britain's entry to the EEC, led to a steady growth of trade and investment with the United States and Japan.' Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *An Australia-USA Free Trade Agreement: Issues and implications*, 'The bilateral relationship and an FTA', p.71, retrieved 24 September 2007, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/aus_us_fta_mon/chapter7>

²⁴¹ See further discussion on this object on pp. 201–202.

²⁴² 'Modernism' is interpreted in this thesis as a movement encompassing the concept of the new as it was interpreted through the twentieth century in ideology, social structure, technological innovation and artistic expression.

and utilitarian ... in the main the emphasis will be on ministering to the wants of the modest, average home ... The aim is to secure something really new, practically useful, artistically satisfying ... In this co-operation between art and industry, it is originality that will be stressed at the Exhibition in order that the deepest wells of Swedish creative genius may be tapped.²⁴³

The Australian professional journal, *Architecture*, carried two reports on the exhibition in its 1931 issues. Sir John Sulman reported on it as a highlight of a visit to Sweden in 1930:

During our stay in Stockholm the Exhibition of Swedish Industrial Art, Handicraft and Domestic Appliances was in full swing... Surrounded by beautifully-laid out gardens, and lavishly lit at night by electricity, it attracted crowds of visitors, quite apart from the wonderful collection of applied arts in carpets, tapestries, weaving, costumes, beautiful glassware, among which that of Orrefors was pre-eminent, graceful and most skilful work in wrought iron, stained and painted glass of brilliant but well-blended colour, furniture orthodox and otherwise in wood, and novel in steel tubing, and domestic appliances of all kinds, from the most simple to the most complex.²⁴⁴

Another Australian architect, Eric Garside, also reported on the appropriateness of the exhibition buildings' architecture for their applied arts displays:

Individually, the buildings were very fine, and by simple colouring on the steel stanchions, beams, and walls quite a decorative setting was produced for the exhibition of silver and glassware, books and book-binding, electrical and household appliances, etc., for which Sweden is so well known.²⁴⁵

The Stockholm Exhibition, which was staged in Stockholm's Djurgården recreation district, elevated Functionalism to an official position in Sweden's face to the world. The exhibition received unprecedented publicity for Sweden, due in part to the unwavering commitment to this doctrine in its program of exhibitions, events and services to the public. Organised and administered by the *Svenska Slöjdföreningen* (The Swedish Society for Crafts and Design) under the direction of Gregor Paulsson,

²⁴³ 'The Stockholm Exhibition', *WA Building and Construction*, Perth, 13 June 1930, p. 15.

²⁴⁴ J Sulman, 'An illustrated lecture delivered before the Town Planning Association on Monday, 17th April, 1931', *Architecture*, vol. 20 no. 9, 1st September 1931, pp. 207–208.

²⁴⁵ E Garside, 'Board of Architects of New South Wales: Reports of travelling scholars: Fifth report of Eric Garside', *Architecture*, vol. 20 no.10, 1 October 1931, pp. 219–221.

with Gunnar Asplund (1885–1940 Sweden) as its chief architect, it was inspired by the earlier 1927 *Die Wohnung* exhibition at Weissenhof in Frankfurt, Germany. That exhibition, widely publicised, introduced functionalist design and architecture for the home to a wide audience.

The functionalist design theme of the Stockholm Exhibition contributed to raising the aspirations of a the whole spectrum of Swedish society, from the working classes still living in substandard housing, to those who were positioning Sweden as the social laboratory of Europe in terms of its attention to welfare, health, housing and education.²⁴⁶ Asplund's reputation as Sweden's most prominent architect gave the project considerable authority, and his work for the project attracted interest worldwide. Its focus on architectural lightness and openness, its functional spaces and the nationalism of its propaganda had relevance to Australian concerns for the adoption of similar aims to address the provision of adequate housing and general urban improvement. Sulman's report on his visit to Stockholm gave an indication of this:

...In town planning, Stockholm is well in advance of Sydney, as it possesses a very efficient Town Planning Department under the control of the City Council. Its most striking achievement is the group of garden suburbs Appelviken, Alsten and Nockeby, to the west of the city, on the shores of Lake Malar.²⁴⁷

The Scandinavian countries participated in the World Fairs in Chicago (1933), Paris (1937) and New York (1939) with pavilions and exhibitions designed by prominent architects such as Finland's Alvar Aalto. Sweden's Orrefors glass company exhibited at the Milan Triennales from 1926, joined by exhibits of the work of Swedish ceramicist, Tyra Lundgren, and Alvar Aalto in 1936. These exhibits received critical acclaim and brought their countries' design-led industries a level of international exposure that rivalled or overtook those of other, wealthier and better-resourced industrialised countries such as Britain and Germany.

This period coincided with an international revival of studio craft, spearheaded by developments in Japan, Britain and the United States of America that were aligned with

²⁴⁶ The aims of the Stockholm Exhibition, its design and content and the responses to it are discussed fully in E Rudberg, *The Stockholm exhibition 1930: Modernism's breakthrough in Swedish architecture*, Stockholmia Förlag, Stockholm, 1999.

²⁴⁷ Sulman, op. cit., p. 207.

an increasing interest in modern interpretations of the vernacular culture of those countries. This movement in the United States had strong roots in Scandinavian models of design and craft education, in particular in the program of the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, formally established in 1932. It had been developed from 1924 by Eliel Saarinen (after his immigration to the United States in 1923, following his second-prize-winning design of the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition), who went on to become its President in 1932. Saarinen's international reputation as an architect had stemmed from his success, with partners Armas Lindgren and Herman Gesellius, in designing the Finnish Pavilion at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris as an expression of an emergent Finnish cultural identity, together with other civic and commercial projects articulating the themes of Finnish National Romanticism with a rational approach to architecture and planning.²⁴⁸

Saarinen's work in America, however, gave him the opportunity to start afresh and make a link between the Arts and Crafts character of his earlier work to design work inspired by the Bauhaus ideals of form determined by function and the observation of organic models. His submitted design for the City of Canberra in 1912 (fig.30) was the runner-up to that of Walter Burley Griffin in the international design competition for the future city, and thus links him to Australia for the first time. Saarinen had been developing designs for several urban projects at the time, including designs for new urban precincts in Helsinki, Finland; Budapest, Hungary; and Tallinn, Estonia. Given the short time in which he had to prepare a design for the Canberra competition, in his submission he most probably drew upon ideas he had been developing for the European projects. Visionary and uncompromising, his design's curvilinear organicism also revealed a debt to the theories of nineteenth century German planner, Camillo Sitte, fitting a radially-linked framework of urban districts to the unseen topography of Canberra provided to entrants by the competition organisers.²⁴⁹ The formality of his design was seemingly at odds with Griffin's geometric organicism, yet was perhaps connected through their shared grounding in the principles of Frank Lloyd Wright's naturalism.

²⁴⁸ Saarinen's early twentieth century work is discussed in Mäkelä, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁴⁹ Camillo Sitte (Germany 1843–1903) developed a new approach to city planning in Germany, emphasising design based on the organic spatial relationships and curvilinear streets of medieval towns. His 1889 book, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (*City planning according to artistic principles*), was widely read in Scandinavia, strongly influencing urban design of the 1900 period. For a discussion on Sitte's influence on Saarinen see D De Long, 'Eliel Saarinen and the Cranbrook tradition in architecture and urban design', in J Clark et al., *Design in America: The Cranbrook vision 1925–1950*, Harry N Abrams, New York, 1983, pp. 49–50.



Fig. 32
Elie Saarinen's design for the city of Canberra

Saarinen's lakeside home and architecture studio, *Hvitträsk*, which he built with partners, Lindgren and Gesellius in 1902, was a rich example of the Finnish National Romantic style and of the home as a total work of art. It became a lively centre for discourse on design, paralleling Wright's establishment and circle at Taliesin in Chicago. Wright and Saarinen knew and respected each other as colleagues and became friends when Saarinen moved to the United States. Visitors to *Hvitträsk* who contributed to discourses on the articulation and expression of nationalism included Saarinen's friends, Gustav Mahler, Jean Sibelius, Maxim Gorky and the leading Finnish National Romanticist painter, Akseli Gallén-Kallela.²⁵⁰ A number of architects lived and worked there with Saarinen. Among them was Frans Nyberg, who wrote of his involvement with Saarinen in the development of his design for the Canberra competition, which was prepared in the short time of six weeks:

Elie Saarinen was a happy mixture of artistic ability, intelligence, energy, ambition, seriousness and wit. This made him an ideal person for even the most demanding of competitions... Time began to run short while we were involved in the Canberra competition, arranged by the Australians during my early years at *Hvitträsk*. We worked until two and three in the morning during the last two weeks ... I recall lying outstretched for days on a table used for perspectives over general views of the

²⁵⁰ M Hausen, 'Hvitträsk: Koti taideteoksena (Hvitträsk: The home as a work of art)', in J Pallasmaa (ed.), *Hvitträsk: Koti taideteoksena*, Otava, Helsinki, 1993, pp. 59–64.

antipodal city. When Saarinen had finally finished the views with his own inimitable hand, we had the impression that we were at the far side of the globe.²⁵¹

Speculation of what might have eventuated in Canberra if Saarinen had won the competition instead of Griffin, and been given the chance to realise his vision in Australia, is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, we can perhaps imagine how the classicism and organic order evident in his design might have played out in the Australian context by the example of his rational and unpretentious design of the Cranbrook faculty. Canberra is not verdant Michigan and we shall never know, but for Saarinen, the opportunity to test his theories on a grand scale set him on a path of educating a new generation of designers who would exert an international influence, reaching as far as Australia, through the second half of the twentieth century.²⁵²

As Director of Cranbrook from 1932 to 1948, Saarinen developed a program of craft and design education that attracted students who would form the vanguard of modern design in America during the 1940s and 1950s. Among them were his son, Eero Saarinen (1910–1961), and Charles and Ray Eames, whose collaborative work with moulded plywood revolutionised furniture design and production. A 1952 article on Saarinen in the *Australian Home Beautiful*, the Australian writer, Keith Dunstan, introduced the architect to its Australian readers:

... in the U.S., one of the most promising and successful of the young architects is Eero Saarinen. At 41 he is carrying on the work of his great predecessors. Saarinen is the son of the famous Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen who died here [the USA] in 1950. Few people realised that there was another Saarinen until in 1939 Eero won three competitions in a row for work on a school, playground and a music hall. ... He quickly became known as one of the country's leading designers of modern furniture and he won several prizes from the Museum of Modern Art.²⁵³

Eero Saarinen was to have a connection with Australia in 1957 as one of the judges for the competition for the Sydney Opera House, the winner of which was the Danish architect, Jørn Utzon. Saarinen had met Utzon in America in 1949 and would have recognised in Utzon's design the same soaring organicism that he had been applying to

²⁵¹ F Nyberg, *Minnen från Hvitträsk*, manuscript pp. 5–6, cited in Hausen, op. cit., p. 49.

²⁵² Saarinen expounded on these theories in his books: *Search for form: A fundamental approach to art*, Reinhold, New York, 1948; and *The search for form in art and architecture*, rev. ed., Dover, New York, 1985.

²⁵³ K Dunstan, 'Eero Saarinen...architect', *Australian Home Beautiful*, March 1952, pp. 26–29, 41.

his own projects, such as his celebrated 1959 TWA Terminal at New York's Idlewild Airport.²⁵⁴

Saarinen's and the Eames' concepts were exhibited and promoted by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, whose director of its design department, Edgar Kaufman Jr, had organised the highly-publicised exhibitions, *Organic Design in Home Furnishings* in 1940; *Design for Use* in 1941 and the *International Competition for Low-cost Furniture Design* in 1950. Kaufmann was well versed in progressive design, having been associated with Frank Lloyd Wright through his father's commissioning of the architect for the design of his house, the celebrated *Fallingwater* in Bear Run, Pennsylvania, and from his association with the Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto.

Aalto had designed the interior of the Finnish Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair (which closed in late 1939 and reopened in May 1940).²⁵⁵ It housed an exhibition, *Finland: The Country of Freedom and Democratic Spirit*, a theme highly relevant to Finland's then dire wartime situation – more so in the light of its subsequent loss of the Winter War against the Soviet Union in 1940. Aalto's extended stay in the United States, during which he lectured on Finland and its architecture, was to raise funds for its reconstruction. His presence in New York lent authority to the Museum of Modern Art's *Organic Design in Home Furnishings* exhibition and cemented his relationship with Kaufmann, who would become a strong advocate for Aalto's work and for Scandinavian design.

In 1948 Kaufmann, seeing how Scandinavian designers' work was beginning to bring a visual definition to the emergent trading bloc of Scandinavia itself, began to develop a proposal for an exhibition of Scandinavian design for the Museum of Modern Art and visited designers in the four countries to research the project. Kaufmann, along with others who were attempting to define and promote new post-war philosophies of design, '...estimated Scandinavian design as an alternative approach representing a reconciliation of tradition and modernity, intuition and rationality, which to them meant securing human qualities and democracy.'²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ For a discussion on Utzon's relationship with Saarinen, see P Drew, 'Men of vision', *The masterpiece: Jørn Utzon: A secret life*, Hardie Grant, Melbourne, 1999, pp. 68, 134–137.

²⁵⁵ For a discussion on Aalto's exhibition design work, see Á Ólafsdóttir, 'Known all over the world: Alvar Aalto as an international designer', in P Tuukkanen (ed.), *Alvar Aalto: Designer*, Alvar Aalto Foundation, Helsinki, 2002, pp. 15–27.

²⁵⁶ A Skjerven, 'Great expectations: The foundation of a design concept', in Halén, op. cit., p. 29.

By 1948, Finland was moving away from its former structural, political and cultural association with Russia and the Soviet sphere to participate in a newly defined 'Scandinavia', a group of related Nordic nations that derived trading strength through unity. Finland had repaid its substantial war reparations by 1952, the year of its triumphal reappearance as an independent nation on the world stage with its hosting of the 1952 Olympic Games in its capital, Helsinki. As has become usual with the Olympic Games, the host city and country entered the consciousness of those countries whose athletes were participating, and reporting of the event in Australia brought Finland and Helsinki to light for the first time for many Australians. This was also the year in which the Nordic Council was established, its programs and funding bringing opportunities to the Scandinavian countries collectively to promote their cultures internationally.

The emergent United Nations Organisation also focused attention on the newly-emergent group of Nordic nations in several ways: its first two Secretary-Generals were Trygve Lie, from Norway, and Dag Hammarskjöld, from Sweden, and the interior design for several of the major halls for its Permanent Councils were by carried out by Scandinavian designers in a series of commissions in 1950. The United Nations' Board of Design Consultants (an international group of ten architects, among them an Australian architect, GA Soilleux), oversaw the commissioning of the Scandinavian designers, promoting the collaboration as a symbol of the UN's broad mandate of international cooperation. The governments of Norway, Sweden and Denmark had readily offered to support their designers' involvement in the project, making the proposition more attractive.²⁵⁷

The Trusteeship Council Chamber was designed by Finn Juhl, the Danish furniture, interior and exhibition designer whose work had been introduced to the United States by Edgar Kaufmann Jr during the late 1940s. The Norwegian architect, Arnstein Arneberg, designed the Security Council Chamber while the Swedish architect, Sven Markelius, designed the Economic and Social Council Chamber.²⁵⁸ The unpretentious style of Juhl's work, with its emphasis on natural woods, became the most celebrated of the

²⁵⁷ The role of UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie, in possibly influencing the decision to commission Scandinavian designers, particularly the Norwegian, Arneberg (who had also designed Lie's country house in Norway), to the project is discussed in I Glambek, 'The Council Chambers of the UN Building in New York', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History*, 15, 2005, pp. 15–17.

²⁵⁸ Markelius had an international reputation from his work as an architect for the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and as the designer for the Swedish pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Arneberg's reputation grew from his design for the widely publicised Oslo Town Hall.

suite of halls and focused attention on a new style of furnishing that was not American, and perhaps more emphatically, not redolent of the old Europe, German Bauhaus-inspired pre-war modernism or the Soviet Union.

The emergence of a cooperative union of Nordic countries, united by social democracy and eager to take a stronger role in a new world order, suited the mandate of the United Nations. The Scandinavian-designed interior ‘stages’ for the playing out of this order seemed highly appropriate and a triumphal manifestation of the Nordic Council’s inaugural agenda to fuse diplomacy and trade and to elevate modern design to a high and symbolic purpose. In the Council Chambers, delegates and visitors to the United Nations headquarters were exposed to a new type of functional design that embodied modernity and democracy, free of bombast, historical associations and national symbols. Through this highly symbolic commission, Scandinavian design received an official mandate for correctness and appropriateness in the post-war era.

This new language of modernity, which was growing from an understanding and acceptance of shared cultural traditions, has been discussed by the Finnish architect and writer, Juhani Pallasmaa:

... I believe that there is a ‘natural philosophy of architecture’ that ties together theory, practice and experience. I believe that such a natural philosophy is the silent message of the Nordic architectural tradition. ... The most significant feature of Nordic architecture ... is the integration of architecture and society. The degree to which the philosophy and aesthetics of Modernity have become part of social reality is unique. Modernity is the self-evident condition of Nordic democracy and it is impossible to imagine a wider eclectic revival in Nordic culture.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Pallasmaa, op. cit., pp. 144–145.

13. Design lessons: creating an Australian market for Scandinavian design

Reports of the success of Scandinavian design exhibitions in the United States of America and Europe from the early 1950s (in particular the critical acclaim given to the Finnish exhibitions and pavilions at World Fairs and the Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian pavilions and exhibitions at the Milan Triennial) coincided with the introduction of more Scandinavian-designed products to Australia. Such reportage began to build connections in the public mind that would locate the idea and aspirations of modernism with this style of product.²⁶⁰ Support from the governments of the Scandinavian countries to promote their design-led industries through major touring exhibitions underpinned the strategic introduction of Scandinavian products in stores and design centres in most major cities in Australia.²⁶¹ These objects offered a ‘high design’ alternative to the mainstream products, sourced from predominantly Australian and British manufacturers, that dominated homeware and furnishing retailing in the post-war period until the re-establishment of other trade agreements with other countries, and with Japan in particular.

The association of ‘Scandinavia’ with concepts of health, functionalism, hygienic materials and production processes, liberated social values, safety, economy and durability, and general social responsibility began to be regularly made in Australia from the late 1940s. A variety of views was increasingly available through commentary on Scandinavian design philosophies and technical research in professional and popular journals and reports from those (including journalists, architects, retailers and importers) who had visited Scandinavian cities. The leadership of Sweden and Finland in the development of functional and affordable housing was a regular topic for articles in Australian architecture journals, as in this example by J Overall, published in the October–December 1950 issue of *Architecture*:

²⁶⁰ Examples of the reportage of Scandinavian design developments include retailer Bruce Anderson writing on the purchase of Danish chairs by the National Gallery of Victoria in ‘Felton Bequest brings us distinguished Danish chairs’, *Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1953, pp. 21–22; importer Raoul Baudish, ‘Finland designs for modern living’, *Australian Journal for Architecture and Arts*, May 1961, pp. 46–47; and architect DA Norman, ‘Scandinavia sets high design standards’, *Australian Home Beautiful*, August 1950. See further discussion on international marketing of Scandinavian design in Part 2.12.

²⁶¹ See discussion on development of Scandinavian diplomacy and trade with Australia in Part Two.17 and on Scandinavian commercial and cultural promotions in Australia in Part Two.18.

The general impression received by a visitor [to the Continent] is that most, if not all, of the Continental countries have a housing shortage similar to that experienced in both England and Australia, accompanied by controls and restrictions comparable with those in our own country ... In Sweden, flat buildings [apartments] predominate. The present trend is towards units of the 'strip' type of two or three stories, or the 'point' type—a Swedish term—of from ten to fifteen storeys, with two, three, four, or even five more flats per floor...

Overall further commented on how the siting of apartment blocks in natural settings, or within landscaped environments, presented a contrast to the usual urban settings of flats in Australia at the time:

...Housing, both in small and large units, like other Swedish work, is remarkable for its informality. The flats are usually found grouped on rocky, tree-clad slopes, each block being in brick or having a different shade of rendering, with windows and balconies placed where they are needed.²⁶²

Other reports focused on the developments in low-cost prefabricated housing and speculated on their suitability for meeting Australian needs during its post-WWII housing shortage:

In 1948 three of the world's leading manufacturers of timber prefabricated houses pooled their knowledge and resources in an effort to devise an ideal factory-made house to suit Australian conditions...they brought to this country six trial houses. One of these was erected in Canberra, and the others at various sites near Sydney. Two were of the pre-cut type and two of the prefabricated-panel type, while the remaining two represented a combination of both systems. From these experiments was evolved the 'cell' type system, which the manufacturers finally recommended as the most economical technique best suited to large-scale home building operations in Australia.²⁶³

Despite Australia's acute housing shortage in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the concept of the standardised factory-made house did not find favour among developers or builders. Although building materials were in short supply, labour was not and the

²⁶²J Overall, 'Postwar housing in Europe', *Architecture*, October–December 1950, pp. 140–142.

²⁶³'The cell-house system', *Architecture*, October–December 1950, p. 129. The manufacturers were Stex in Sweden and Puurakenne and Puutalo in Finland, operating through the agency of the East Asiatic Company Australia Pty Ltd.

potency of the tradition of the unique house, built by skilled tradesmen, remained as the ideal. It was not until the later, wider demand for second, holiday and temporary houses developed that standardised industrial production methods and materials found favour in the form of kit and transportable homes.

The first Finnish log house in kit form, the *Finn Ratkova* model, was imported to Australia in 1976 by the Finnish Sauna Company. Constructed from Baltic pine at a cost of \$54,000, the simple modern house, which included a sauna, was erected at Lake Jindabyne, NSW. Illustrated in *Vogue Living* in 1976, its interiors show it to be completely furnished with Finnish furniture designed by Alvar Aalto, Marimekko fabrics and Iittala glassware.²⁶⁴

Another aspect of Finnish leisure housing was the *Futuro* house, a circular structure with an elliptical profile made from modules of fibreglass-reinforced polyester plastics. It was designed in 1968 by the Finnish architect, Matti Suuronen (b.1933), as a modular ski cabin that could be mass-produced and delivered complete to a site. Mounted above the ground on metal legs, the *Futuro*, gained worldwide publicity for its ‘flying saucer’ shape and for breaking away from the traditions, forms and natural materials associated with Scandinavian design. The manufacturer, Polyklem, granted licenses to a number of countries, including New Zealand, where Futuro Homes (NZ) Ltd manufactured it for sale in the South Pacific region following a launch at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in New Zealand. Several made their way to Australia to be used as holiday houses and, in several cases, as eye-catching sales offices for housing developments.

Production of the *Futuro* ceased as a result of the petrochemical shortages of the 1970s, but a number still exist, including one at the Canberra Space Dome and Observatory. Now painted silver and forming a distinctive, but incongruous part of the complex, the *Futuro* offers a view of the future from the past. Few would identify this structure as ‘Scandinavian design’, but the clarity of purpose and execution of the original linked it to the innovative and organic work that had made Finnish design visible since the 1930s.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ ‘Holiday houses: A lakeside retreat on the edge of snow country’, *Vogue Living*, no. 6, 1976, pp. 72–73.

²⁶⁵ The design and history of the *Futuro* house is discussed in M Home & M Taanila (eds), *Futuro: Tomorrow's house from yesterday*, Desura, Helsinki, 2002.



Fig. 33
A *Futuro* house (at right, repainted silver) incorporated into the Canberra Space Dome and Observatory

The promotion by Scandinavian design agencies of the output of their design industries, and reports on them in the Australian press, began to reshape the attitudes of Australians to the possible personal and social benefits that could be derived from the production, consumption and everyday use of well-designed, industrially produced domestic products. Many of these were concepts and ideas that had been initially developed for the Scandinavian market. These included the promotion of the health benefits of the sauna and an appreciation of its culture and equipment; efficient and well-designed solid fuel slow-burning heating stoves; the smorgasbord (anglicised from the Swedish *smorgasbord* and Danish *smørrebrød*) style of self-serve dining; and the acceptance of traditional Scandinavian foods such as Swedish crispbread, which was promoted as a ‘health’ food.

Scandinavian products that addressed safety and functionality broadened interest in safe and practical children’s furniture and the design of equipment for the disabled. Swedish-designed and made passenger vehicles designed around the concept of safety and durability offered an alternative to locally made vehicles, where styling and power were promoted over practicality. More widely applicable was furniture for the home that was ergonomically designed, directly expressive of natural (often indigenous) materials, and available in flat-packed (also known as ‘knock-down’) form to save on shipping and assembly costs.

The market acceptability of such concepts and products was increased by the developments in domestic architecture and interior design that had, since the early 1950s, encouraged more informality in the home and a more responsive and reciprocal relationship between nature and the built environment. This coincided with the development of the southeastern Australian ski industry, increased accessibility to ski resorts and a growing definition of a winter leisure culture in Australia. The association of Nordic imagery with such robust outdoor leisure activity was an effective marketing tool for advertisers for a wide range of products introduced to the Australian marketplace in the period from 1960 to 1980. Advertising for products as diverse as toothpaste, soap, sunglasses, knitwear, kit homes and sporting goods were linked with the idea of 'freshness' and 'health' and other qualities supposedly enjoyed by Scandinavians.

The popular media mostly reported favourably and uncritically on such developments, usually drawing copy from importers and agents' press releases on new products. More predictable in the media was the persistence of Scandinavian and Nordic stereotypes, from the stories of Hans Christian Andersen and Lappish culture to Viking kitsch and, later, the pop music group, ABBA, the 'flying Finns' of international car rallying, and, since the late 1980s, eventual parody of Scandinavian design itself as overly didactic and earnest. Even IKEA, the highly successful Swedish furnishing company operating in Australia since 1975, has not escaped such stereotyping.²⁶⁶

Aspects of a deeper and more complex Nordic social culture had begun to be revealed in Australia from the mid-1960s through the coruscating imagery and narrative of films by directors such as Sweden's Ingmar Bergman, along with media reports (often distorted and sensationalised) of supposed sexual libertarianism and 'freedom' enjoyed by the inhabitants of the countries of Scandinavia. The term 'Swedish' became synonymous with an image of robust sensuality and was indiscriminately used as a prefix (eg 'Swedish sauna', 'Swedish massage', 'Swedish smorgasbord' and 'Swedish modern') in the promotion of a variety of new, or re-styled products (many locally-designed and manufactured) and services throughout Australia. 'Danish' as a prefix was

²⁶⁶ The creative adaption and re-purposing of IKEA's products have become the source for inventive parody by an unofficial international collective of do-it-yourself practitioners known as the Ikea Hackers, largely connected through the internet and personal blogs. Their response to IKEA's do-it-yourself philosophy, low price points and accessibility is discussed in P Green, 'Why the customer is always right: A global collective puts its own stamp on a ubiquitous furniture brand', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 October 2007, pp. 20–21. IKEA is further discussed in Part 3.

used to suggest qualities of refined modernism and luxury, while ‘Scandinavian’ was, and remains, an evocative descriptor of an exotic, inspirational, but largely unattainable ‘other’.²⁶⁷ It was, and remains, a term that blurs the cultural distinctiveness of five independent Nordic countries, yet it was exploited and manipulated by those countries in order to increase the overseas market share of the output of their own highly competitive design industries.

The phenomenon of these related and sometimes contradictory marketing strategies, the promotional exhibitions that supported them and the results of the planned targeting of a nascent Australian market by the governments of four Scandinavian countries resulted in a fertile retail environment for Scandinavian-designed products. Sweden, for example, maintained trade offices in the major Australian cities since the 1920s. Its Assistant Trade Commissioner in Melbourne, Eva Yencken, travelled through Australia in 1973, undertaking market research, which resulted in the production of a handbook to assist Swedish exporters gain access to the Australian market.²⁶⁸

Yencken’s research indicated that Australia’s high import tariffs on everyday Scandinavian goods such as textiles and furniture mitigated against a wide market penetration, limiting their exposure and keeping them at the level of luxury goods. Her view is that Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish glass companies achieved good sales in Australia during the 1960s and 1970s because of their products’ innovative and practical designs and consistency, but also in part due to the lack of Australian studio and art glass products on the commercial market. By 1969, the density and depth of the Australian market for Scandinavian products provided a credible and effective demonstration of the acceptance of the aesthetic promoted in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ In an advertisement for the Danish De Luxe company’s *Rifka* chair, the chair was shown without upholstery and with a nude female model. The copy reads ‘Rifka has nothing to hide...Danish beauty is more than skin deep’, *Vogue Living*, 14 August 1979, p. 58.

²⁶⁸ Eva Yencken trained in ethnology and worked as a curator of history at the Nordic Museum in Stockholm before arriving in Australia, where she worked as a consultant for the National Trust of Victoria and the Castlemaine Museum. From 1985, she operated Gallery Freya, a retail business in Melbourne selling Scandinavian jewellery and silver. Notes from the author’s interview with Yencken in Melbourne, 1 July 1995.

²⁶⁹ Iceland, with an undeveloped design industry in the 1960s, was not included in these collaborative trade projects, although from the 1980s it has produced some of the most innovative design work of the Scandinavian countries.

The statistics for the increase in the export value of Scandinavian decorative arts and design and household products to Australia from 1966 to 1969 offer evidence of the success of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, and other promotions during the period, in stimulating the Australian market. The following figures were listed in the final report for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, indicating the importance placed upon a successful outcome of the exhibition in increasing the sales of a number of categories of Scandinavian-made goods in Australia.

The exhibition organisers did not detail the influence of other trade factors from the period of 1966 to 1969 that might have been an influence on the figures presented in the Report, but the percentage increase in sales for each category of product indicates the effect of the increased marketing initiatives occasioned by the exhibition. Had the exhibition and its attendant promotions and publicity not occurred, it is unlikely that such increased sales would have been achieved or recorded.²⁷⁰

Country	Category	1966	1967	1968	1969
Denmark	Textiles and clothing	0.83	1.66	1.66	2.43
Finland		1.17	1.28	1.76	2.03
Norway		2.5	2.56	1.9	1.61
Sweden		4.97	3.54	5.28	6.87
Denmark	Furniture	0.35	0.55	0.49	0.55
Finland		0.07	0.09	0.16	0.21
Norway		0.07	0.3	0.44	0.3
Sweden		0.22	0.34	0.36	0.29
Denmark	Household goods	2.22	2.08	2.91	3.12
Finland		0.87	1.35	1.54	1.50
Norway		0.15	0.15	0.3	0.22
Sweden		3.37	3.69	4.2	4.19
Denmark	Jewellery	0.14	0.21	0.28	0.21
Finland		0.05	0.04	0.07	0.15
Norway		0.02	0.04	0.06	0.04
Denmark	Processed foodstuffs	7.62	6.44	8.11	9.29
Finland		0.47	0.33	0.74	1.38
Norway		8.42	9.00	9.80	9.45
Sweden		0.31	0.23	0.21	0.2
	Total export (Skr)	33.82	33.88	40.27	44.04

Fig. 34
Categorisation and value, by country, of Scandinavian exports from 1966 to 1969, shown in millions of Swedish *kronor* (crowns), from the 1969 Final Report on the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition

²⁷⁰ Tarras-Wahlberg, op. cit., n.p. (author trans.)

14. Mediation and validation: Scandinavia through a British filter

Written accounts of Scandinavian design in overseas books, journals, newspapers, exhibition catalogues, official reports, propaganda and press releases and advertising copy stimulated its reception in Australia. From the 1920s until the 1970s, rhetoric evolved in the professional and popular press to describe and promote Scandinavian design methodology and production. Those who had visited Scandinavia and studied its industry at close hand, adopting its principles to inform their own work, led much of this commentary. Discussion on the subject in the British and American design and architectural press was seldom critical, endowing it with an aura of approval and correctness for Australian readers, who were mostly unable to experience the work of Scandinavian designers at first hand in its countries of origin.

The reception of Scandinavian design in Australia was in many cases mediated through Britain, where 'Scandinavian design' as a marketing concept and design category was defined in 1951, following two decades of promotion by importers and retailers of products from individual Scandinavian countries.²⁷¹ Australian designers, architects and retailers gravitating to Britain (and London in particular) in the early 1950s often had their first direct exposure to Scandinavian products then being sold and promoted there. Australians designers, who noted their pleasure in seeing such products in London, included David Foulkes-Taylor (1929–1966) arriving as a design student at the Central School in 1948, and who was later to become the leading design entrepreneur in Perth.²⁷² Another arrival was the Sydney designer, Gordon Andrews (1914–2000), who came to London in 1949 and worked as a designer with the Design Research Unit. He described how Finnish design '...first impinged on my consciousness...' when he visited the celebrated Tapio Wirkkala-designed Finnish exhibition at the 1951 Milan Triennial, then a mecca for London-based design professionals, a number of whom were expatriates such as Andrews.²⁷³

The Melbourne designer and furniture retailer, Bruce Anderson, spent two years in London assisting in the selection of furnishings for the 1951 Festival of Britain exhibitions. On his return to Australia in 1953, he advised the National Gallery of

²⁷¹ The exhibition, *Scandinavian design for living*, held at Heal's department store in London in October 1951, was the first to use this descriptive phrase.

²⁷² David Foulkes Taylor's and Bruce Anderson's careers are discussed in Part Two: 16.

²⁷³ Gordon Andrews discusses his career as a designer in his monograph, *A designer's life*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1993, p. 112.

Victoria on the acquisition of several modern Danish chairs for its collection.²⁷⁴ Writing on this acquisition, Anderson explained the rationale for his recommendation of Hans Wegner's 1949 *Round Chair* and Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Nielsen's 1950 *AX* chair:

Anyone interested in the cultural achievements of their own age will be delighted to find two very fine examples of Danish craftsmanship now on view in the Melbourne National Gallery. There are two chairs, each representing two vital streams in modern furniture design – one steeped in the European tradition of craftsmanship, but in tune with the aesthetic notions of our day, and the other representing logical design and highly-developed technical skill ... There is no reason why the products of our own day cannot be compared on an equal footing with the products of past epochs, and the National Gallery in bringing out these examples is aligning itself with the more progressive galleries oversea [sic] and providing an incentive to our own craftsmen and manufacturers.²⁷⁵

A number of British importers and distributors took on the role of promoters of a Scandinavian aesthetic and modern design in general, often using British design firms to interpret this in the design of their trade showrooms, trade fair stands and advertising. Print advertising, which used distinctive modern graphic design featuring products by well-known Scandinavian designers, was placed in professional furnishing trade journals and architecture magazines. This strategy ensured that Scandinavian-designed products would be seen and specified by architects, interior designers and other opinion-shapers, not only in Britain but also in British-focused countries such as Australia, where such trade journals were, as a matter of routine, received by design professionals. The offices of many British expatriate or Anglophile design professionals in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong or Canada, for instance, were often places where one could often find at least a few examples of Scandinavian furniture, imported for evaluation for local placement or simply as a touchstone to a shared vision of well-crafted modernism.

The highly publicised design by the Danish architect, Arne Jacobsen, of St Catherine's College, Oxford, begun in the late 1950s and completed in 1963, drew increased attention to the Scandinavian influence in British design and its buildings and furnishings and has provided a credible and practical example of it for several

²⁷⁴ Notes from the author's interview with Bruce Anderson at his home in Hawthorn, Melbourne on 20 October 1998.

²⁷⁵ Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.

generations of Oxford's undergraduates and visiting academics.²⁷⁶ Jacobsen's design included all of the building's furnishings, many of which (such as the austere and sculptural Oxford high-backed, plywood and leather chairs made by Fritz Hansen) were put into production, providing for buyers a tangible link between Danish and British design.

In an unrelated event in 1963, Jacobsen's work as a designer was given unexpected publicity when his already well-known 1951 moulded plywood *Ant* chair (which had usually been associated with institutional use) was depicted by the British photographer, Lewis Morley. (b. 1925).²⁷⁷ He used it as the sitter's prop in his famous (apparently) nude photograph of Christine Keeler (the central figure in the political and sexual scandal known as the 'Profumo affair') straddling the chair. While the design cognoscenti readily recognised the design provenance of the chair, the wide circulation of this image made an indelible association between middle-class licentiousness and the clean modernity of such furniture. This proved to be a false assumption, revealing the taste of the photographer more than that of the subject, but the notoriety of the image endured.

The London department store, Heal's, stocked the widest range of Scandinavian products, supplied by a number of British distributors of Scandinavian products. Under its own brand, Heal's also produced Scandinavian-influenced furniture, designed by Christopher Heal, head of its design office, and other British designers such as AJ Milne, Robert Heritage, Harold Long and Howard Keith (HK Furniture).²⁷⁸ Heal's was the leader in the promotion of Scandinavian design through special promotions such as its exhibitions, *Scandinavian Design for Living* in 1951 and *New Scandinavian Designs* in 1956. The 1951 exhibition, held in the same year as the *Festival of Britain*, attracted a large audience, including non-Britons in London for the event, many of whom would have been seeing Scandinavian-designed goods for the first time. The title of that popular exhibition was the source of the term, 'Scandinavian design'.

²⁷⁶ For a full account of the relationship between the architecture and interior furnishings of St Catherine's College, see PE Tøjner and K Vindum, *Arne Jacobsen: Architect and designer*, Dansk Design Center, Copenhagen, 1999, pp. 92–103.

²⁷⁷ J Annear, *Lewis Morley*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006, p. 49.

²⁷⁸ Lesley Jackson discusses the entrepreneurial role played by Heal's in introducing Scandinavian design models to Britain in 'A positive influence: The impact of Scandinavian design in Britain during the 1950s', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History*, vol. 3, 1993, p. 57–58.

Following Heals' lead, other major retailers in London, such as Liberty's, Woolands, John Lewis and Harrods began to stock Scandinavian furniture in the mid-1950s. By 1960, the demand for such product was strong enough to support several smaller retailers in London and smaller British cities.²⁷⁹ From about 1960, a cooperative venture of a number of the main Finnish manufacturers of modern design operated Finnish Designs, a display and retail business in Haymarket, London. Its period of operation coincided with the advent of the new wave of fashion and design known as 'swinging London'. The pared-back design and visual simplicity of its merchandise, from manufacturers such as Artek and Marimekko, aligned with the reductive and simple design work of younger fashion designers, such as Mary Quant, whose work was beginning to revolutionise British design and stimulate Australians visiting London during the early 1960s.

The importer, Finmar, was established in 1931 to import Alvar Aalto's furniture, produced in Finland by Artek, first exhibiting it at London's Fortnum and Mason department store in 1932. The company ceased trading in 1939, before being re-established between 1947 and 1949 by Paul Ernst von Stehmann. After its re-establishment, the firm expanded its range of imports to include products from Denmark and Sweden, acting as the British agent for a number of Scandinavian furniture, glass, ceramic and lighting manufacturers, representing Artek furniture, Johannes Hansen furniture, Fritz Hansen furniture, Le Klint lighting, Rafa pottery, Nuutajärvi glass, Arabia ceramics and Gense metalware. The company also manufactured Scandinavian furniture designs under license in their own factory in Essex, including that by the Swedish company, Dux. This range of products was well known and used by British architects and interior designers and was among the first post-World War II imports from Scandinavia.²⁸⁰

In 1964, the design entrepreneur, Terence Conran, opened the first of his Habitat stores in London, revolutionising the way that contemporary design was marketed. Scandinavian design, exemplified particularly in the products of companies such as Finland's Marimekko (textiles), Arabia (ceramics) and Nuutajärvi and Iittala (glass), had begun to be seen as part of the leading edge of European modernist design in the

²⁷⁹ K Davies, 'Scandinavian furniture in Britain: Finmar and the UK market, 1949–1952', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 10, no.1, pp. 39–52.

²⁸⁰ See L Jackson, 'A positive influence: The impact of Scandinavian design in Britain during the 1950s', *ibid.*, pp. 41–60, for a full discussion of the influence of Scandinavian imports on British design and merchandising.

1960s. Conran's retail technique placed products from these, and other lesser-known British and European companies, on mass display. He created a new approach to merchandising in contrast to the spare exclusivity that characterised the displays of Scandinavian design in specialist retailers' stores, creating a shopping experience that appealed to a younger and less affluent age group. His design for the Habitat stores was strongly influenced by the design of the Copenhagen department store, Illums Bolighus, which by the early 1960s was widely known for its advocacy for advanced Scandinavian design and the elegant presentation of its merchandise.²⁸¹

Designers, architects and home and office furnishing retailers (Australians increasingly among them) visiting Britain during the 1950s gravitated to the showrooms and exhibition trade stands of such importers and distributors, often experiencing Scandinavian-designed products in the flesh for the first time, and subsequently making contacts with, and visiting Scandinavian manufacturers, and their designers, at the source. Thus Britain, with its embrace and market-testing of the Scandinavian interpretation of post-war modernism, became something of a 'gateway' to Scandinavia for the English-speaking design world of the Commonwealth.²⁸²

British furniture inspired by Scandinavian models found a ready market abroad. One of the most successful in interpreting Danish design themes was the company, G-Plan, which used the Danish designer, Ib Kofod-Larsen (b 1921), to develop a range of functional, multi-purpose furniture. These began to be imported into Australia in 1962 by the Terley company in 1962, where, in its Terley G-Plan Gallery in Melbourne 'Luxurious upholstered furniture will be exhibited in rooms adjoining displays of modern Danish designs.'²⁸³

²⁸¹ Located at Amagertorv 10 in Copenhagen, this store was a magnet for designers from many countries (the author included), with a strong influence in its presentation of merchandise on entrepreneurs such as the Briton, Terence Conran.

²⁸² Kevin Davies examines the impact of Scandinavian furniture in Britain at a time when it was being reported in Australia through the British design press in his articles: 'Norwegian wood? Scandinavian design in Britain 1950–65', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 8, 1998, pp. 80–93, and 'Twentieth century Danish furniture design and the English vernacular tradition', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 7, 1997, pp. 41–57. Davies' work is useful for understanding the nature of influence and mediation of ideas as it related to Scandinavian design's reception in Australia in the post-WWII period. British design historian, Lesley Jackson, discusses the impact of Scandinavian design in Britain and America in 'A positive influence: The impact of Scandinavian design in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 3, 1993, pp. 41–60; *Contemporary: Architecture and interiors of the 1950s*, Phaidon Press, London, 1994; *The New Look: Design in the fifties*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1991; and *The sixties: Decade of design revolution*, Phaidon, London, 1998. These texts have expanded on her study of Scandinavian design, placing it in the broader historical context of international design in the mid-twentieth century

²⁸³ 'Noted English furniture comes to Australia', *Australian House and Garden*, October 1962, p. 121.

The introduction of a 15% tax on all imported manufactured goods in Britain in 1964 resulted in increased prices and the reduction of distributors' ability to maintain large and varied stocks of Scandinavian product in Britain, decreasing its visibility and accessibility and, eventually, its influence in the marketplace.²⁸⁴ This visibility at the more expensive and design-focused end of the market was gradually replaced by the mass marketing of less-expensive Scandinavian products by larger chain stores and by manufacturers, in particular IKEA, with their own production and distribution networks.

²⁸⁴ Jackson, 'A positive influence', *op. cit.*, p. 59.

15. Propagating Scandinavian design as a model for Australian practice

Discourses on design from Scandinavian sources in the twentieth century have been shaped by the writings of theorists, proselytisers, propagandists, critics, professional advocates, curators and designers. From writers outside the Nordic region, discussion on Scandinavian design has focused more on its place as an exemplar of rationality within a wider field of international modernism and design histories. Few comprehensive texts on Scandinavian design history have been written by non-Scandinavians and most discussion from these writers has been in the form of journal articles and as (or within) book chapters.²⁸⁵ Indeed some of the most influential commentary on Scandinavian design has appeared in the popular press, where propaganda, press releases, advertising copy and earnest technical specifications have encapsulated in a few words the spirit and style of Nordic life and design.

The enduring power of slogans to focus ideas and galvanise others to action has an effective history in Scandinavia. It is best exemplified in Gregor Paulsson's 1919 manifesto and pamphlet of the same name, *Vackrare vardagsvara (More beautiful objects for everyday use)*.²⁸⁶ It followed Ellen Key's *Skönhet för alla (Beauty for all)*,²⁸⁷ a slogan based on her 1899 publication of the same name, in which she asserted the role of aesthetics in a wider social context founded on democracy and increased equality.²⁸⁸ Later came the term 'Swedish grace', used to describe Swedish neoclassical design of the 1920s and 1930s. It was coined in the late 1920s by Philip Morton Shand, editor of the British journal, *Architectural Review*, as he wrote 'The world will look up to Sweden as the supreme exponent of a Modernism which has succeeded in finding its own soul and embellishing itself with a purely mechanistic grace'.²⁸⁹

The region's expertise in design became part of the generally positive stereotyping of the Nordic countries in numerous books written in English by American, British and Australian authors about its history, traditions, its peoples and cultures and available in Australia. In his 1915 book, *Scandinavia of the Scandinavians*, Henry Goddard Leach,

²⁸⁵ Notable exceptions are McFadden, op. cit.; and E Harrison Beer, *Scandinavian design: Objects of a lifestyle*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 1975.

²⁸⁶ Dr Gregor Paulsson (1889–1977 Sweden) was an art historian, art critic, Curator of the National Museum in Stockholm from 1916 to 1920, Managing Director of the Swedish Society of Craft and Industrial Design and editor of its journal from 1920 to 1934.

²⁸⁷ Ellen Key (1849–1926 Sweden) was a writer and women's rights advocate.

²⁸⁸ C Widenheim, 'Utopia and reality', in C Widenheim (ed.) *Utopia and reality: Modernity in Sweden 1900–1960*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2002, p. 78.

²⁸⁹ P Morton Shand, *Architectural Review*, August 1930, p. 70.

the Secretary of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, included a number of references to contemporary architecture, crafts and design, placing them in relation to Nordic painting and sculpture as being among the region's premier art forms.²⁹⁰ He describes the work of a number of designers and manufacturers, including the Danish potter, Thorvald Bindesbøll (1846-1908), the ceramic production of the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain, the Bing and Grøndahl and Kähler companies,²⁹¹ the Norwegian designer Gerhard Munthe (1849–1929), the tapestry weaver Frida Hansen (1855–1931), the ceramic decorator Thorolf Holmboe's (1866–1935) designs for Norway's Porsgrund company, the jeweller Thorolf Prytz (1856–1938)²⁹² and the Swedish painter and designer Carl Larsson (1853–1928).²⁹³ In a chapter on *sloyd* (craft), Leach made a connection between craft and industry:

In the industrial arts, also, the sloyd propaganda has brought about a higher standard of harmony in line and colour. A visit to the furniture shop of Giöbel, the works of Rörstrand porcelain, of Gustavsberg pottery, to Hedberg's book bindery, or Forsberg's display of hammered iron utensils, and, above all, to the salerooms in Stockholm for exquisite needlework, of the Licium Guild or those of the 'Friends of Handiwork', will reveal the influence of the cottage industries on modern production alike of hand and machine.²⁹⁴

Like Leach, who had written this book as part of his work for the American-Scandinavian Foundation, later authors of books on the design of the Scandinavian countries often did so within or because of their employment in official design-related organisations. Although this official backing often meant that these writers' commentaries could be presented in English, or other major European languages, usually in the form of the exhibition catalogue or cultural journal, it also meant that it verged on propaganda and advertising, thereby blunting any possible critical edge.

The writer, Ulf Hård af Segerstad, was quite direct in his allegiances:

One of the fundamental reasons for the relatively swift realization of the renaissance in applied arts [in Scandinavia] is that it was inspired and partly directed by independent,

²⁹⁰ HG Leach, *Scandinavia of the Scandinavians*, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, London, 1915.

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, 'Danish art and architecture', pp. 113–115.

²⁹² *ibid.*, 'The fine arts in Norway', p. 164.

²⁹³ *ibid.*, 'Swedish art and architecture', p. 248.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 'Sloyd', pp. 262–267.

idealistic organizations enjoying the trust of the consumer, designer, producer and even the authorities. An organization of this sort exists in each of the Nordic countries. One could go so far as to state that almost all important happenings within the field of applied arts in Scandinavia can be traced back in one way or another to these organizations.²⁹⁵

These publications remain a useful reference for study of the field, however, as they demonstrate the rhetoric that underpinned the highly successful exhibitions of Scandinavian design from the 1950s onwards.

Reports on aspects of Scandinavian design were regularly available to Australian readers of the British art journal, *The Studio*, in articles written by Scandinavian commentators from 1931 to 1953.²⁹⁶ Reporting on developments in Swedish design, Helmuth Duve observed:

In the field of interior decoration certain forceful personalities have recently come into the foreground, such as [Carl] Hörvik, [architect, Carl] Malmsten, [Eskil] Sundahl, [architect, Gunnar] Asplund and above all [Axel Einar] Hjorth, an interior-architect in the modern style ... Despite all the functional suitability which is to be found in modern Swedish interior decoration, the general impression is that there is a tendency to tone down the excessive hardness of the contours by means of a show of beauty ... form remains the dominant factor in the life of the Scandinavian people as much in their art as in their culture.²⁹⁷

Continuing, he reports on a Swedish decorative arts exhibition held in London in 1931, which followed on from the interest in the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition: 'There is much in the Swedish temperament that finds a peculiarly ready response from English people ...'²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ U Hård af Segerstad, *Scandinavian design*, Studio Books, London, 1961, p. 13.

²⁹⁶ A series of articles on aspects of Scandinavian design published in *The Studio* included: H Duve, 'The modern home as Sweden sees it', *The Studio*, 101, no. 457, 1931, pp. 288–291; A Skold, 'The Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts', *The Studio*, 131, no. 638, 1946, pp. 150–153; 'Royal Copenhagen Porcelain', *The Studio*, 131, no. 639, 1946, pp. 188–191; GS Whittet, 'Aage Weimar', *The Studio*, 132, no. 645, 1946, pp. 184–185; A Davis, 'David Anderson: Norwegian silversmiths', *The Studio*, 132, no. 641, 1946, pp. 56–59; SE Rasmussen, 'The art of Denmark: Industrial', *The Studio*, 138, no. 680, 1949; Å Huldt, 'The art of Sweden: Craftsmanship and design', *The Studio*, 144, no. 72, 1952, pp. 24–31; A Remlov, 'The art of Norway: Contemporary applied art', *The Studio*, 145, no. 727, 1953, pp. 124–127.

²⁹⁷ Duve, op. cit., p. 288.

²⁹⁸ *ibid* p. 291.

By 1946, the emphasis had shifted from reporting on interior decoration to the immediate problem of post-war housing and social welfare, areas where Sweden demonstrated a strong commitment to materials and technology research, ergonomics and design. In a report on the centenary exhibition of the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts, Arna Sköld wrote:

... [the exhibition] showed how to handle actual problems of to-day and the direction of its aspirations for to-morrow, in order to obtain a good combination of industrial design and social welfare.²⁹⁹

The British journal, *Art and Industry*, addressed the developments in post-war design in a number of articles in the late 1940s. Architect FR Yerbury, wrote of a Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts exhibition, *We Live in the City of Light and Air*, held in Malmö in 1944 that it:

...offers suggestions which might well be studied by some of our housing architects...this scheme shows what a difference can be made in housing if placed in the hands of imaginative people properly trained in architecture and town planning.³⁰⁰

A 1947 *Art and Industry* article, 'A modern Swedish home', documented an exhibition of modern furniture by the Swedish Nordiska Kompaniet at London's Building Centre, organised by the Design and Industries Association and the Council of Industrial Design. Writer, Grace Lovat Fraser, reported on the new development of knock-down furniture:

As one expects from any selection of Swedish work the level, both of design and of workmanship, in this exhibition was of a very high level...the furniture shown is light and graceful in design and planned to take up as little space as possible while giving a maximum of comfort and utility...but when one has admired the elegance of the designs and the quality of the materials and workmanship there comes a surprise—all of these pieces of furniture are 'knock-down' or 'package' pieces which are delivered to the purchaser packed flat in small and easily handled containers...but, alas, none of it can be bought in this country—we can only admire and envy.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Sköld, op. cit., p. 150.

³⁰⁰ FR Yerbury, 'A city of light and air', *Art and Industry*, no. 236, vol. 40, February 1946, pp. 48–5

³⁰¹ GL Fraser, 'A modern Swedish home', *Art and Industry*, no. 249, vol. 42, March 1947, pp. 66–71.

The most widely-known and accessible texts available in the early 1960s, the period of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition development were Ulf Hård af Segerstad's *Scandinavian Design*,³⁰² and Erik Zahle's *A treasury of Scandinavian design*.³⁰³ Hård af Segerstad's text introduced the concept of four Nordic countries sharing and developing one tradition of design. This was a theme that he was to pursue in later writing, specifically in 'Four countries: One tradition of design', the introductory essay for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition catalogue and also for the lead catalogue essay for the *Scandinavian Crafts* exhibition in Japan a decade later.³⁰⁴

Reports in the Australian press—newspapers, popular magazines and trade and professional journals—focused on the high design standards set and achieved by Scandinavian architects, designers and planners. Such articles used the Scandinavian example as a measure by which Australian achievement in design could be judged. They typified the tone of journalistic reportage that would continue through the twentieth century, and which would be applied to the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

The Australian journal, *The Home*, regularly ran articles on aspects of Scandinavian crafts and design. In a 1927 issue, the Sydney home of Swedish Consul-General, Einar Lindquist, was illustrated, noting 'A splendid example of how an ordinary room, by the disposition of selected furniture and ornament, may become an apartment of elegance.'³⁰⁵ A subsequent article in 1928 focused on Swedish Orrefors glass then being displayed at the Grosvenor Galleries in Sydney, noting 'Nothing so delicate as this work [by Orrefors' artists, Simon Gate and Edward Hald] has been seen in Australia before.'³⁰⁶

Broadening its focus to include architecture and the decorative arts, the journal *Art in Australia* had published articles extolling the aesthetic (and by implication, social) benefits of modern design since the mid-1920s, often using Scandinavian examples. In March 1941, in his article 'Design for leisure: the seaside', the Australian architect Arthur Baldwinson wrote:

³⁰² U Hård af Segerstad, *Scandinavian Design*, Nordisk Rotogravyr, Stockholm, 1961 (translated into seven languages, including English).

³⁰³ E Zahle, *A treasury of Scandinavian design*, Golden Press, New York, 1961.

³⁰⁴ Hård af Segerstad, 'Four countries: One culture of form', in *Scandinavian crafts*, op. cit.

³⁰⁵ 'Connoisseurship and comfort', *The Home*, 1 June 1927, p. 17. Photograph by Harold Cazneaux.

³⁰⁶ 'A flash of glass from Sweden', *The Home*, 1 February 1928, p. 25.

As entertainment becomes increasingly specialised, we Australians should be able to look to our seashores for comprehensive entertainment centres, like Copenhagen's 'Tivoli' and other Scandinavian pleasure gardens.

His article was illustrated with images of a contemporary diving tower, baths, dance floor and open-air café at Oslofjord, Norway, as an example of what might similarly be achieved at Sydney's Bondi and Manly beachfronts.³⁰⁷ However, Australia's beachside and coastal design culture developed in a completely different way, its hardness, overbuilding, commercialism and regulations perhaps reflecting the harshness of the coastal environment, so unlike the cool and sylvan lakesides and shorefronts of Scandinavia.

In June 1941, Australian architect Roy Simpson wrote on the development of modern group housing, noting that:

Sweden was a forerunner in this field, developing a remarkable series of timber house models which are sold from showrooms much as we sell motorcars, the purchaser frequently assembling his own house.³⁰⁸

The *Australian Home Beautiful* ran regular articles on these themes during the 1950s, addressing its growing readership of post-war homeowners and builders. In May 1950 the article, 'Swedish settings', introduced the concept of 'knock-down' furniture that had been earlier reported in the British press:

Sweden produces some of the best of the world's furniture and these photographs show the latest developments by the Nordiska Kompaniet in knock-down furniture which is sent to buyers in cartons, ready for assembly.³⁰⁹

The idea of practical and relatively inexpensive modern furniture being available even in the post-war period of scarcity triggered interest in such products in Australia. In the *Australian Home Beautiful* August 1950 issue, Melbourne architect DA Norman wrote in his article, 'Scandinavia sets high design standards', that:

³⁰⁷ AN Baldwinson, 'Design for leisure', *Art in Australia*, 1 March 1941, pp. 76–77.

³⁰⁸ R Simpson, 'Approach to housing', *Art in Australia*, 1 June 1941, pp. 67–69.

³⁰⁹ 'Swedish settings', *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1950, pp. 24–25. Nordiska Kompaniet is a major Stockholm department store.

It is unnecessary and undesirable for us to adopt other ways and ideas without considering if they suit our environment. But a visit to Scandinavia's large cities should convince any Australian that we have much in common with that part of Europe and much to gain from a study of life there. The visitor cannot fail to notice the high standard of stock furniture and soft furnishings generally available in Sweden and Denmark. We are accustomed to the crude lines and vulgar veneers favored by many of our own designers, and it comes as a relief to see good contemporary furniture in such quantity ... We can, however, learn from Scandinavia's example if we study the principles underlying their design and adopt the same direct simple approach.³¹⁰

Such articles fuelled a culture of comparison and raised aspirations for Australian design, architecture and town planning to reach the same level of rationality, quality and relevance to everyday needs as the Scandinavian examples detailed by writers and commentators from the design professions. The route to achieving such successes may have seemed simple to such proselytisers—for instance, through government legislation and control, design education, response to community needs, practicality and restraint in matters of style and material usage. However, from the tone of their writing, it appears that most did not investigate or sufficiently appreciate the substantial differences, in the commitment of governments to design education and promotion, between the Scandinavian world and Australia that weakened the case for equal achievement and innovation in matters of design and the built environment.

Sweden, for example, as a neutral country, had emerged from the wartime period of the 1940s with its design infrastructure intact and well developed, building on the functionalist philosophy and experience of its highly developed pre-war design industry. Designers from other Scandinavian countries, who had sought refuge in Sweden and studied or worked there during the war, also emerged into the late 1940s with highly developed design skills, which they took back with them to their home countries at the end of hostilities and occupation.³¹¹ As an example with later relevance to Australia,

³¹⁰ DA Norman, 'Scandinavia sets high design standards', *Australian Home Beautiful*, August 1950, pp. 15–17.

³¹¹ A leading figure residing in Sweden from 1940 to 1945 was the architect Arne Jacobsen, a Danish Jew who fled from German-occupied Denmark to Sweden with his wife, the textile printer Jonna Jacobsen. With limited resources and opportunities to work on architectural projects, the couple developed wallpaper and textile prints during this period. This aspect of Jacobsen's career is discussed in Tøjner & Vindum, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Another temporary expatriate was the Norwegian architect Arne Korsmo who, while living in Sweden, developed a friendship with another temporary resident, the Danish architect Jørn Utzon. This relationship is discussed in A Skjerven, "'Like a sculptural painting': Arne Korsmo's interior architecture in Norway after World War II", *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, no. 1, vol. VI, 1998–1999, p. 6.

among the first to move to Sweden during this period was the Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, who left after the completion of his thesis at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen in July 1942, returning in May 1945. During this time, Utzon immersed himself in a study of the work and design philosophies of the Swedish architect, Gunnar Asplund, and a study of Chinese architecture, influences on his work that were revealed in his later 1957 design for the Sydney Opera House.³¹²

Design organisations that had existed since the late nineteenth century mobilised in the late 1940s to promote design as a valuable export commodity. They successfully found government support to promote Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish products in what had been successful pre-war markets such as the USA and Britain, as well as in newly-identified markets—Canada, Australia, Japan, Germany, Italy, Israel and France among them—where Scandinavian-designed and manufactured products were admired, but scarce and unsupported by official promotional programs.³¹³

Despite the cultural impetus of Australia's Federation period (identifiable in design terms from about 1900 to 1925) that supported the expression of regional and vernacular themes in design and architecture, Australia by the late 1940s had no comparable infrastructure to train, support or promote design and designers. Unlike the countries of Scandinavia, where small-scale, decentralised production allowed a continuation of traditional craft skills to inform production and maintain quality, Australia's industrial base was in no position to nurture design experimentation. The material shortages that plagued the 1940–1950 period worldwide elicited different responses. In Finland, for instance, severe shortages of manufactured materials encouraged highly inventive uses for its indigenous woods and by-products, drawing upon the national ethos of *sisu* (perseverance) to create a national design identity in the face of hardship brought on by politics as much as geography and climate. The aestheticisation of such deprivation became the leitmotif for Finnish design through the 1950s, where such elegant austerity stood out in an international marketplace defined by

³¹² For a detailed account of Jørn Utzon's work and study in Sweden during World War II, see P Drew, *The masterpiece: Jørn Utzon: A secret life*, Hardie Grant Books, Melbourne, 1999.

³¹³ Denmark and Sweden maintained active and entrepreneurial trade offices connected to their embassies and consular offices, allowing them to assess market conditions and make recommendations on trade promotions. In Australia, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Australia, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands was established in 1911.

the stylistically elaborate and materially complex industrial design products of better-resourced countries.³¹⁴

In contrast, Australia's stoic and astringent traditions of 'making-do' and the thrifty use and re-use of scarce and expensive materials failed to cross over into mainstream product design at a time when such approaches to manufacture might have gained some market share.³¹⁵ Instead, these traditions found new expression as part of an energetic 'do-it-yourself' movement, encouraging participation in a number of aspects of the crafts of homemaking; from homeowner-building to homemade dressmaking and furnishings and the assembly of furniture from purchased design kits.³¹⁶ The most popular and successful of these were the *Australian Home Beautiful* magazine's successful *Patterncraft* kits, designed by Fred Ward and introduced in 1947, many designs of which showed a distinct Swedish modernist influence in their use of plain timber and simple forms.³¹⁷

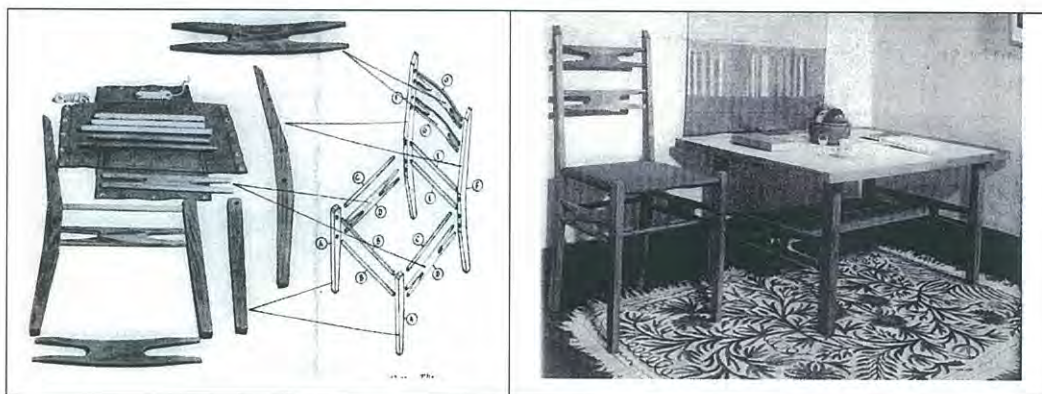


Fig. 35

Blue-print table and chair designed by Fred Ward 1951

While generally enthusiastic about Scandinavian design, most writers and commentators failed to understand fully the strength and enduring influence of the climate-driven,

³¹⁴ See H Kalha, 'The *other* Modernism: Finnish design and national identity', in Aav & Stritzler-Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–51.

³¹⁵ This spirit did inform the work of some independent design studios established in the late 1940s by designers such as Roger McLay, Gordon Andrews and Douglas Snelling, as they experimented with military-use materials such as plywood and plastics, which had become available after 1945. The effects of the post-war period on design is discussed in M Bogle, 'Design goes to war', *Design in Australia 1880–1970*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1998, pp. 106–109.

³¹⁶ The author had direct experience of this movement in 1954, when his father, working for a car importer, procured a large American wood container that had been used to transport a new Nash Airflyte car and converted it to a work cabin on the site of the family's house he was building in Perth.

³¹⁷ 'Furniture from paper patterns', *Australian Home Beautiful*, November 1947, p. 16; 'Make your own furniture from blue-prints', *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1951, pp. 30–31.

‘home-centred’ culture of the Nordic countries, which had nurtured craft and design for centuries and had formed the central focus of the market for locally manufactured goods.³¹⁸ Immigrant designers and specialist crafts practitioners arriving in Australia in the late 1940s found little local industry where they could effectively use their skills and many turned to ‘backyard’ manufacture on very limited resources to produce small ranges of furniture of their own design.³¹⁹

Discourses on design led by commentators, such as the Australian architect, writer and broadcaster, Robin Boyd, and those leading the newly formed Australian design associations, regularly held Scandinavian design up as an example of what could be achieved in Australia, if design education and awareness was improved. They drew attention to Australia’s and the Scandinavian countries’ similarly small population, isolation, natural resources and the pervasiveness of a dramatic and relatively unspoilt natural environment as factors inspiring creative design.³²⁰ Boyd had visited Denmark and Sweden in 1951, during his first trip to Europe with his wife, Patricia. His biographer, Geoffrey Serle, wrote that for Boyd:

It was difficult not to over-enthusiase about neat, prosperous Sweden (neutral during the war) and wonderful Stockholm where they delayed for a fortnight—feasting on smorgasbord, the freshness of the model country-town of Borås, the absence of poverty and slums, the contentedness of the people under social democratic rule. ‘The acknowledged rules of integrity in architecture [were] observed by a whole community...this country has given the twentieth century the appearance of dignity.’... Architects were content with the tolerantly administered system [of planning regulations] but Boyd could not be convinced that design control was not ‘stultifying to progress’. Nevertheless, ‘architecture, in the first half of the twentieth century, belonged to Sweden’, was its ‘natural art’.³²¹

³¹⁸ Richard Haughton James, president of the Australian Society of Designers for Industry, led debates about the inadequacies of Australian design, using Swedish and Danish models as examples for manufacturers to emulate: ‘Challenge to the furniture industry’, *Australian Home Beautiful*, September 1954, pp. 22–23.

³¹⁹ Immigrants included Fred Lowen (German, arrived 1940), Ernest Rodeck (German, arrived 1940), Schulim Krimper (Austrian, arrived 1939), Douglas Snelling (American, arrived 1942), George Korody (Hungarian, arrived 1939) and Paul Kafka.

³²⁰ The first Australian professional organization for industrial designers was the Society of Designers for Industry (SDI), formed in 1947–48. The Society of Industrial Designers Australia (SIDA) was formed in Sydney in 1958, the same year that the SDI and the Interior Designers Association (established in 1951) combined to become the Industrial Design Institute of Australia (IDIA). An umbrella organization, the Industrial Design Council of Australia (IDCA) was established with Commonwealth Government funding also in 1958.

³²¹ G Serle, *Robin Boyd: A life*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 110. Serle’s quotes are from Robin Boyd’s 1951 talk, ‘Australian Taste’.

The work of influential Scandinavian architects, such as Finland's Alvar Aalto, Denmark's Arne Jacobsen and Sweden's Gunnar Asplund, was well known—if only through commentary and photographs in architecture journals—to most Australian architects practising during the 1950s and 1960s.³²² These professionals were prominent among 'early adopters' and specifiers of contemporary Scandinavian furniture and interior products, or Australian copies and variants of them.

The search for other models of design and the successful application of social democratic theories fostered a desire among a number of architects and planners to investigate at first hand the projects that were receiving wide attention in the Scandinavian countries.³²³ In 1950, the Melbourne architect, DA Norman, reporting on these developments in an article in the *Australian Home Beautiful*, took up the theme of comparison:

... a visit to Scandinavia's large cities should convince any Australia that we have much in common with that part of the Europe and much to gain from a study of life there ... Why is it that we Australians, too young to have provided ourselves with much of a culture, are so conservative in our tastes? ... The visitor cannot fail to notice the high standard of stock furniture and soft furnishings generally available in Sweden and Denmark. We are accustomed to the crude lines and vulgar veneers favored by many of our own designers, and it comes as a relief to see good contemporary furniture in such quantity....

Norman continues with what would become a regular theme of comparison and learning from the Scandinavian example:

We can, however, learn from Scandinavia's example if we study the principles underlying their design and adopt the same direct simple approach. ... In conclusion, there are signs that the lessons learned there are gradually being understood by our own artists and architects, but – we still have a lot to learn from Scandinavia!³²⁴

³²² Melbourne architect, Frederick Romberg, partner of architect and design writer and broadcaster, Robin Boyd, '...had intense admiration for the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, similarly used concrete and white paint...', *ibid.*, p. 142; Boyd had been shown around Copenhagen in 1951 by Danish architect, Arne Jacobsen, *ibid.*, p. 110; Asplund's work had been discussed in wider circles, resulting from the publicity of his design work as Chief Architect of the 1930 *Stockholm Exhibition*.

³²³ Robin Boyd took his first research trip to Europe in 1951, visiting planned towns in Sweden, *ibid.*, p. 110.

³²⁴ DA Norman, 'Scandinavia sets high design standards', *Australian Home Beautiful*, August 1950, pp. 15–17.

Another regular commentator on design issues, Richard Haughton James, president of the Australian Society of Designers for Industry, took up this theme in a 1954 article in the *Australian Home Beautiful*, criticising the Australian furniture industry's lack of design research and commitment to inexpensive modern design. His article is illustrated with examples of Scandinavian-designed chairs, noting the retail cost of each:

Why is it so difficult to buy inexpensive, well-designed furniture – modern furniture – in Australia? Why don't manufacturers make it and most furniture stores stock it? In England, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland and other countries such furniture is plentiful, with a big range to choose from. Shops in every district sell it. People in all income groups can buy it. Don't we want it? ³²⁵

A number of Australian furniture manufacturers responded to the interest in Scandinavian design by introducing ranges of furniture using design elements adapted from the imported furniture seen in popular magazines. While much of what purported to be 'Scandinavian' was derivative and poorly detailed and executed, its low cost and therefore wider availability brought the Scandinavian aesthetic to a wider consumer market.

³²⁵ RH James, op. cit. James was a prominent proselytiser on matters of modern graphic and industrial design in Australia, through radio broadcasting and journal articles, initiating the formation of the Society of Designers for Industry in 1948 and through his book, *Commercial art: The arts in Australia*, Longmans Green and Co Ltd, Melbourne, 1963.

Scandinavian inspired
DANISH-LINE SUITE
latest teak finish, dramatic styling, luxury comfort from . . . £85

Dramatic modern styling and blissful comfort combine to make our new "Danish-Line" suite a real pace-setter in modern living. Plush 4" rubber cushions, on tension spring bases for luxury, deep seated comfort. Lounge Products have made cleaning easy too. Rough wool covers zip off quickly! Oiled wood gives a teak finish.

Call in to Lounge Products, feel the extra comfort built in to this suite. You'll find a huge range of fabrics to choose from. Three-seater lounge and two chairs priced from £85.

lounge products

TWO SHOWROOMS: NORTH
 SYDNEY: 50 Walker Street,
 92-2370. NEWTOWN: 642
 King St. (near St. Peter's Stn.),
 51-7201.

Fig. 36
 Lounge Products *Danish-Line Suite* advertisement,

Elements of Australia's 'cultural cringe mentality' were evident in discussions on the supposed superiority of Scandinavian design achievements.³²⁶ As late as 1975, Australian architect Harry Seidler's catalogue introduction to the touring exhibition, *Architecture in Finland*, offers an example. On the Finnish planned town of Tapiola he writes:

... when I saw it in 1966, I felt that I would probably not see anything comparable in Australia in my lifetime ... (One hates to imagine the visual excesses and desperate competitive individual glory seeking that would result from an Australian group endeavour of this kind!).³²⁷

³²⁶ 'Cultural cringe', a term to describe Australia's supposed cultural inferiority in relation to ideas and works (particularly cultural production) from overseas, derives from a 1950 essay by the Melbourne critic, Arthur Phillips. It was re-published with additional essays as AA Phillips, *A.A. Phillips on the cultural cringe*, Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne, 2006. This subject is also examined in L Hume, *Another look at the cultural cringe*, The Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney, 1993.

³²⁷ H Seidler, 'Introduction to the exhibition', in *Architecture in Finland*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Sydney, 1972, pp. 3–5. For an account of the development of the planned town of Tapiola, see T Tuomi (ed.), *Tapiola: Life and architecture*, Housing Foundation, Tampere, 2003.

On the Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto's, Viipuri Library:

... The excellence of workmanship with its delicate and accurate detailing are evidence of the high level of craftsmanship in the country which allows architects to demand tasks in their designs which we would be reluctant to even contemplate.

and, finally, addressing a familiar theme of example and comparison:

... It can be only hoped that the influence which this exhibition will undoubtedly have in Australia will inspire us and make us resolve to set our sights higher than in the past for the sake of the future of our environment.³²⁸

Major events such as the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games stimulated discussion on the state of Australian design and concern about the impression it would make on international visitors to Australia.³²⁹ In Melbourne, this led to several exhibitions being organised to promote Australian design, particularly those products with designs based on abstracted imagery of Australian floral and faunal themes and motifs.³³⁰

Later, Perth's hosting of the 1962 Empire Games had focused both public and the Western Australian State Government attention on the planning and design of public facilities (such as the Games' venues and athletes' accommodation), creating opportunities for architects to enter a more public debate on the benefits of design to the community. The Games Village (where the athletes and their retinues were housed), created in a new subdivision of the Perth beachside suburb of City Beach, consisted of a group of small houses designed by the Perth architect, Peter Overman, a Dutch immigrant. The houses were notable for their open design, influenced in part by the late 1950s designs of the Case Study Houses program of California, and the more commercial and widely publicised late-1950s and 1960s houses by the California

³²⁸ *ibid.*

³²⁹ For discussion of the Melbourne Olympic Games' stimulus for the arts see J Engberg (ed.), *Melbourne, modernity and the XVI Olympiad*, Museum of Mern Art at Heide, Melbourne, 1996.

³³⁰ Melbourne designer and founding member of the Industrial Design Institute of Australia, Ron Rosenfeldt, organised the *Industrial Design* exhibition held during the *Arts Festival of the Olympic Games* in Melbourne in 1956. His catalogue for this exhibition outlined the state of Australian design and, with exhibits of products designed by Douglas Annand, Richard Beck, Frances Burke, Selwyn and Joyce Coffey, Grant Featherston, Charles Furey, Walter Gheradin, Edward Healey, Richard Haughton James, Ron Rosenfeldt, and Joyce Wright, was the first major exhibition of Australian design in the post-war period. This event is discussed in a wider context in M Bogle, 'Constructing an audience', *op. cit.*, pp. 133–138.

designer/developer, Joseph Eichler.³³¹ With their low-pitched roofs separated from low horizontal walls by large areas of glass, each of the Games Village houses was open to gardens designed around informal plantings of Western Australian native wildflowers, shrubs and trees.

In their massing, garden walls, extended roofs, extensive glazing and their use of exposed construction elements (painted brick and rough stained jarrah wood beams) the Games Village houses also showed a debt to the design work of the Danish architects, Jørgen Bo and Vilhelm Wohlert, designers of the well-known Louisiana Museum of Modern Art near Copenhagen.³³² The furnishing of one of the houses as an official reception house, to be used by visiting Games officials and patrons, was undertaken by the local designer and furnishings retailer, David Foulkes Taylor, who made extensive use of the Danish furniture that he imported, combining this with art and craft works by prominent Western Australian artists. The overall impression of this house and its furnishings, in particular, was of lightness, informality and naturalism, qualities in keeping with the spirit of the Games.³³³

The placement of Scandinavian-designed products as key elements in interior design was given more visibility through the international and Australian architectural and popular design press from the 1950s onwards. The ‘iconic’ presence of Danish, Swedish and Finnish furniture in Australian modern buildings, for instance, was orchestrated by architects and interior designers (and publicised by magazine feature editors, trade representatives and advertisers) to signify an ‘intelligent modernism’ and rationality in their work.³³⁴ The previously-mentioned example of the Academy of Science furnishings showed that, even using locally-made copies, it was possible for the average visitor to the building to sense that there was a difference from the usual type of practical contract furnishings that one might expect in a government building devoted to the sciences. The domestic scale and finish of the Danish De Luxe blackwood chairs

³³¹ Eichler’s domestic housing projects are discussed in J Ditto & L Stern, *Design for living: Eichler homes*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1995.

³³² Bo’s and Wohlert’s group houses of 1961 are discussed in K Dirkinck-Holmfeld, *Danish Architecture 1960–1995*, Arkitektens Forlag, Copenhagen, 1995, pp. 58–59.

³³³ For a contextual examination of architect-designed domestic housing in Perth see G London & D Richards (eds), *Modern houses: Architect designed houses in Western Australia from 1950 to 1965*, The University of Western Australia, Perth, 1997.

³³⁴ Architect Robin Boyd’s book, *The Australian ugliness*, published in 1960, drew upon his lectures and articles of the previous decade criticising the debasement of design in Australia. In his architectural practice, he set an example of a less-fashion-driven approach to design by including in his interiors award-winning Danish and Swedish furniture that reflected the material and structural clarity of his building designs. Serle, op. cit., p. 187.

was in contrast to the building's space-age form, suggesting human intervention and interaction into the closed world of the sciences.³³⁵ Danish De Luxe developed its range of furniture during the early 1960s, moving away from direct copying of such well-known Danish models to the production of refined designs still influenced by current trends in Denmark. With its local production and the use of Australian timbers, the company's designs became synonymous with the functional organic form of imported Danish furniture, but at a substantially lower price.³³⁶



What's so de luxe about Danish De Luxe?

We like to think it's our attitude. A no-compromise attitude that will not settle for second best. But an adventurous attitude that's willing to explore what's new — and willing to acknowledge that man-made fabrics are among the marvels of modern living.

So when we present our Inga Down Suite that's covered with Vynex Doehide we make no apologies because Vynex Doehide isn't natural leather. We think that Doehide puts leather in its place (a once-upon-a-time sort of place) and we prefer to live in the present.

Vynex Doehide is just as luxe as leather — looks as good, feels as natural — but lasts ten times as long. Because it's a never-before sort of Vynex with

a resilience, softness and warmth that no other Vynex fabric has ever achieved. Vynex Doehide, a very special Vynex, developed after months of intimate cooperation between Danish De Luxe and I.C.I.

It "gives", so it can't crack. It's yieldingly soft and warm. And it comes clean with a damp cloth. No need to pamper and polish it. Our Inga Down sofas are quite remarkable, too. They combine the resilience of rubber with the feel of softest swan-down. When teamed with Vynex Doehide they give you a new experience of comfort — comfort that's really de luxe. Worth investigating. You'll find our complete Danish De Luxe range at all good stores.

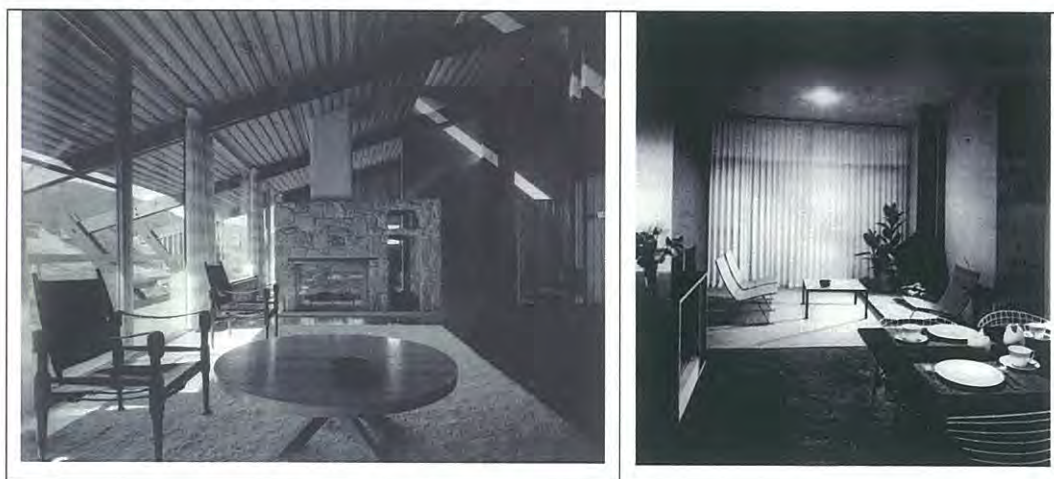
Danish De Luxe

Fig. 37
Danish De Luxe advertisement for its *Inga* chair, 1964

³³⁵ See discussion on this in Part 3.3 and detail in Appendix 5.

³³⁶ The production of Australian commercial and factory-produced domestic furniture that was influenced by Scandinavian models is discussed in S Jackson, 'Blonde wood among the gum trees: Scandinavian influences in furniture design in Australia 1930–1975', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History*, no. 13, 2003, pp. 36–51.

Other architects, such as Harry Seidler, called upon Scandinavian furniture to perform a more rigorous role in defining the purpose of his domestic and commercial buildings. While Grounds referred to the refined classicism of Danish wood furniture to conjure the vernacular, Seidler chose more architectonic models, such as the spare steel and woven cane *PK-22 Easy Chairs* designed in 1955 by Poul Kjaerholm, to dispel any sense of the local in the reinforcement of his position as an internationalist within Australian architectural practice. These chairs were seen illustrated in the living room setting of a Seidler-designed house in the south Sydney suburb of Miranda in 1959. This model of chair appears in other photographs of Seidler's house interiors of the period (taken by Seidler's usual photographer, Max Dupain). Its expense and rarity at the time suggests that it was possibly part of a selection of expensive display furnishings owned by Seidler's practice, to be used in numerous settings for photography, and not the property of the homeowner.



Figs 38–39

left: Interior of Thredbo Ski Lodge by Harry Seidler. Foulkes Taylor's *Poona* chair on left
 right: Interior of Miranda house by Harry Seidler. Kjaerholm's *PK-22 Easy Chairs* opposite coffee table

An exception to his specification of well-known imported designs was Seidler's use of the Western Australian jarrah *Poona* chairs in his 1962 Thredbo Ski Lodge.³³⁷ They were also used in architects, Clive Evatt's and Fred Muller's houses in New South Wales in 1964 and had been supplied by Anderson's Pty Ltd in Melbourne from May 1959 on the recommendation of Melbourne architect, Peter McIntyre, following his

³³⁷ K Frampton & P Drew, *Harry Seidler: four decades of architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1992, illustration p. 59 (photographer, Max Dupain).

meeting with Foulkes Taylor in Perth. This demountable easy chair, designed in 1958 by David Foulkes Taylor, was based on the traditional British officers' folding campaign chair, an example of which was in his family's possession. Describing the chair in a letter to a client, a Miss P Jespersen, of Nannup, Western Australia, on 14 May 1959, Foulkes Taylor wrote:

The Poona chair was originally designed and made for the Indian cavalry during the last century. I have altered a few of the details, but the total effect is as of the original. The timber is oil-finished Jarrah, the leather is top quality and the fittings are brass.³³⁸

His decision to make an updated version of this chair may have been inspired by the Danish designer Kaare Klint's famous version of this design, known as the *Safari* chair designed in 1933 and manufactured by Rud. Rasmussens Snedkerier. This was the first successful Danish export product sold internationally in 'knock-down' form and Foulkes Taylor would certainly have encountered it while living in Britain from 1948 to 1952. Architects were no doubt familiar with this design, as it had been widely published, and for them it represented a casual approach to furnishings that suited their domestic architecture of the 1950s. The *Poona* chair closely followed the design of the *Safari* chair, but was made in jarrah, with 'waterbag' canvas or leather seat and arms.

Danish designers, Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Neilsen's revolutionary laminated wood *AX* chair appears in Robin Boyd's 1954 *Pelican* house for Kenneth Myer in Mt Eliza, Victoria. An example of this chair had just been purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne as one of its first acquisitions of modern design, and was internationally notable for its 'knock-down' construction, use of laminated wood and clean lines.³³⁹ This model was distributed in Australia by the Anderson's Furniture store in Melbourne. The house and its interior, with the *AX* chairs as dominant decorative elements, were illustrated in *Architecture and Arts*, *Vogue Australia* and *Best Australian Homes*.³⁴⁰ The semiotics of this furniture placement revealed Boyd's linkage of the innovative and resolved design of the *AX* chair to the experimental plywood-faced geometric beams of the house's roof design.³⁴¹

³³⁸ Letter from David Foulkes Taylor Archive, AGWA.

³³⁹ For a description of this chair, see N Oda, *Danish chairs*, Korinsha Press, Kyoto, 1996, pp.80–81.

³⁴⁰ N Cleheran, *Best Australian Homes*, 1961.

³⁴¹ Serle, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–9.

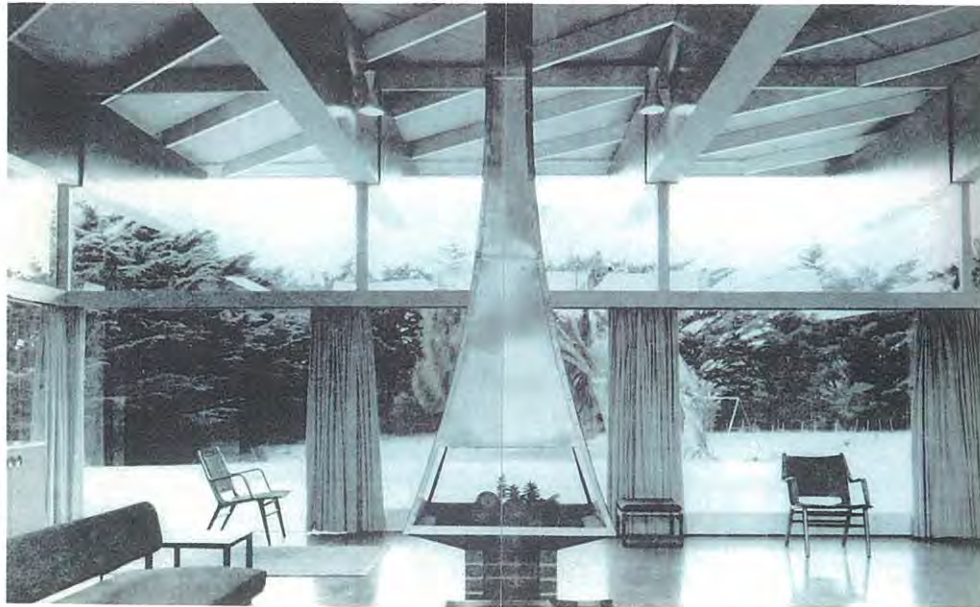


Fig. 40
Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Neilsen's *AX* chairs in Boyd's 1954 *Pelican* house
(photo: Kenneth Ross)

Scandinavian 'branding' signified a link with European ideas of the modern, celebrated craftsmanship and design without ostentation and helped to emphasise the informality and natural ambience that a number of Australian architects and designers strived to achieve in their domestic work of the 1950s and 1960s. The humanist logic and social responsibility that had surrounded Scandinavian design from the 1930s had given it an aura of 'correctness'; that is, an appropriate and economical use of natural materials and unpretentious and functional design. Such an approach to design was well suited to the tastes of the educated and design-aware elites that had begun to commission the new domestic architecture in Australia in the 1950s, and their choice of such furniture and objects allowed escape from the dullness and conservatism of the mainstream pre-war style of furnishings. It facilitated avoidance of resorting to the flashier aspects of post-war commercial modernism such as industrially produced and 'styled' furniture, made from chromed metal and synthetic materials such as laminates and vinyl, against which commentators such as Robin Boyd railed. In his discussion on 'Featurism' (his invented term) in his influential book, *The Australian ugliness*, Boyd states that 'It [Featurism] is the evasion of the bold, realistic, self-evident, straight-forward, honest answer to all questions of design and appearance in man's artificial environment...'³⁴²

³⁴² R Boyd, *The Australian ugliness*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK, rev. ed., 1968, p. 24.

These early introductions of Scandinavian-designed products to the lexicon of modern design in Australia created a higher visibility for crafts and design in general. By 1970, well-developed Scandinavian products were accessible in specialist and general retail stores in most Australian cities and were well supported by a younger clientele that was more aware of international developments in architecture and design. These products, competitively-marketed during the peak period of exposure to Scandinavian design from about 1965 to 1975, provided competition and an incentive for the Australian crafts and design-led products that were becoming visible in the marketplace at the same time.³⁴³

In 1975, with the opening of its first store in the north Sydney suburb of Artarmon and the establishment of its first major store in Melbourne in 1976, the Swedish homewares retailer, IKEA, initiated the mass marketing in Australia of innovative and high-quality Swedish design at main street prices. However, rather than trading on the cachet of the expensive and rare Scandinavian-designed objects, produced by established and prestigious ‘name’ companies such as Orrefors, Kosta Boda, Iittala, Artek and Georg Jensen, that were sold only in small gift and design shops and some major department stores, IKEA assumed no such prior knowledge on the part of its Australian customers. Its unabashed use of the yellow and blue of the Swedish flag dominated the company’s branding in its publicity and on its barn-like buildings usually located in the light-industrial districts of each city.³⁴⁴

The company’s image drew upon its commitment to the design testing and ergonomics that have been part of Sweden’s industrial practices since the 1940s.³⁴⁵ Functionalism, practicality and durability were the prime themes in the promotion of its merchandise, which was presented in accessible, room settings that matched both the scale of most customers’ homes and their ability to construct the knock-down furniture themselves. IKEA brought over thirty years experience in international retail to its Australian operations and achieved high visibility in the Australian market by appealing to a suburban market, becoming the most recognisable Scandinavian brand in Australia.

³⁴³ See discussion on Scandinavian-influenced design production in Australia in Part Three: 21.

³⁴⁴ For a history of IKEA, see B Torekull, *Leading by design: The IKEA story*, Harper Collins, New York, 1998. Torekull discusses the development of IKEA’s test laboratory for furniture and the integration of testing demonstrations in its stores on pp. 70–71.

³⁴⁵ The *Hemmens Forskningsinstitut-HFI* (the Home Research Institute) was established in 1944 to carry out research into aspects of living in the home, including consumer research and advice and product testing. Its history and programs are discussed in J Blow, ‘Overseas review: Sweden: Co-ordination for consumer research’, *Design*, July 1961, pp. 72–77.

By the 1990s, a number of IKEA's products were no longer produced in Sweden, or indeed in Scandinavia. Its founder, Ingvar Kamprad, wrote of this change:

The truth is that in the long run no Swedish production capacity was sufficient for our needs. Nor would we have been able to keep prices as low as we did had we not been challenging Swedish producers to become better and more efficient... we need suppliers from all over the world to secure activities back at home in Sweden.³⁴⁶

To reinforce the Swedish brand image of IKEA, a greater emphasis was placed on the personalities and careers of its (mainly) Swedish designers, whose names had not previously been promoted in the company's publicity and catalogues. IKEA's stores increasingly emphasised peripheral Swedish products, such as traditional Swedish packaged foods and meals in their cafés, to reinforce the Scandinavian distinctiveness of its brand.³⁴⁷

Quality and design comparisons were regularly (but often unfairly) drawn between the industrially backed and well-financed Scandinavian products and the output of individual Australian craft studios. The Scandinavian products, particularly decorative glass, were often designed to have the handmade appearance of unique studio crafts, but which were actually serially or mass-produced goods, with a high degree of handmaking and finishing, with facsimile designers' signatures. This approach to design and production should not be read as an intention on the part of manufacturers to deceive, as it was the accepted and well-trialled methodology of production of craftsman-designed objects conceived to be produced in quantity by teams of production artisans. The role of the designer in the production process gave manufacturing a creative face, a position that was promoted in many companies' production catalogues, trade exhibits and in-store promotions, where visiting glass designers often engraved their signatures on examples of the products they had designed.

The reality of the situation by the early 1970s was that the studio crafts sector was gaining momentum in each of the Scandinavian countries. The fields of textiles, studio ceramics, studio glass, metalwork, woodcrafts, jewellery and furniture were beginning to be developed by individuals drawing upon traditional craft processes and skills while

³⁴⁶ I Kamprad, 'The dream of the good capitalist', in Torekull, *ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁴⁷ 'The miracle store', *ibid.*, p. 77.

acknowledging the expressive culture of contemporary craft practice promoted more widely by craft organisations in Britain and the United States of America. Sweden in particular had experienced a shift of emphasis and funding away from the factory-sponsored, studio-based production to the development of industrial design and mass-production, as the Scandinavian design industry as a whole began to respond to its gradual eclipse by Italian-designed and manufactured products in the international marketplace. Design organisations in Scandinavia, particularly in Sweden, had also been unprepared for the ‘anti-design’ movements spurred by the student revolutions in Europe (including Scandinavia) in 1968 and were forced to scale back Government-supported programs for design that they had taken for granted. Such activism brought forth new approaches to design that acknowledged environmental and ergonomic concerns and a less wasteful use of materials.

On her return to Sweden in February 1969, from her year-long stay in Australia, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg found a ‘completely changed situation in the design field’. Instead of building upon the success of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in distant Australia during that tumultuous year with other planned international promotions, on her return she had to devote her energy to restructuring her faltering organisation, the *Svenska Slöjdföreningen*, to deal with a different attitude to the purpose and promotion of design.³⁴⁸ Economics forced the shrinkage of the applauded and envied ‘artist/designer/craftsman-in-industry’ programs of a number of companies, along with their generous support and the free hand given to individuals to develop their own studio work that could influence production items. This left the craft sector somewhat technically impoverished and less able to compete with the more robust and innovative individual studio craft culture developing at the time in the United States of America and Britain.³⁴⁹

Comparisons between Australian and Scandinavian production methods did, however, encourage commentary and a dialogue between artists and promotional organisations about quality, accelerating concerns within the Australian craft sector for the improvement of design, marketing and mainstream acceptability of its output. The commissioning of contemporary craft works for public buildings by interior designers and architects began to give visibility and authority to the work of Australian

³⁴⁸ Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg comments from e-mail correspondence with the author, 14 September 2007.

³⁴⁹ J-L Opstad, ‘Contemporary design: Challenge and revival’, in McFadden, op. cit., pp. 209–210.

practitioners, such as weavers Mona Hessing (1933–2005) in Sydney, Rinske Car (b.1944 The Netherlands) and the author in Perth. Each was commissioned to design and produce large tapestries from about 1965 to the late 1970s, using textile methods that they had developed within a framework of reference to Scandinavian textile techniques such as Finnish *ryijy*.³⁵⁰

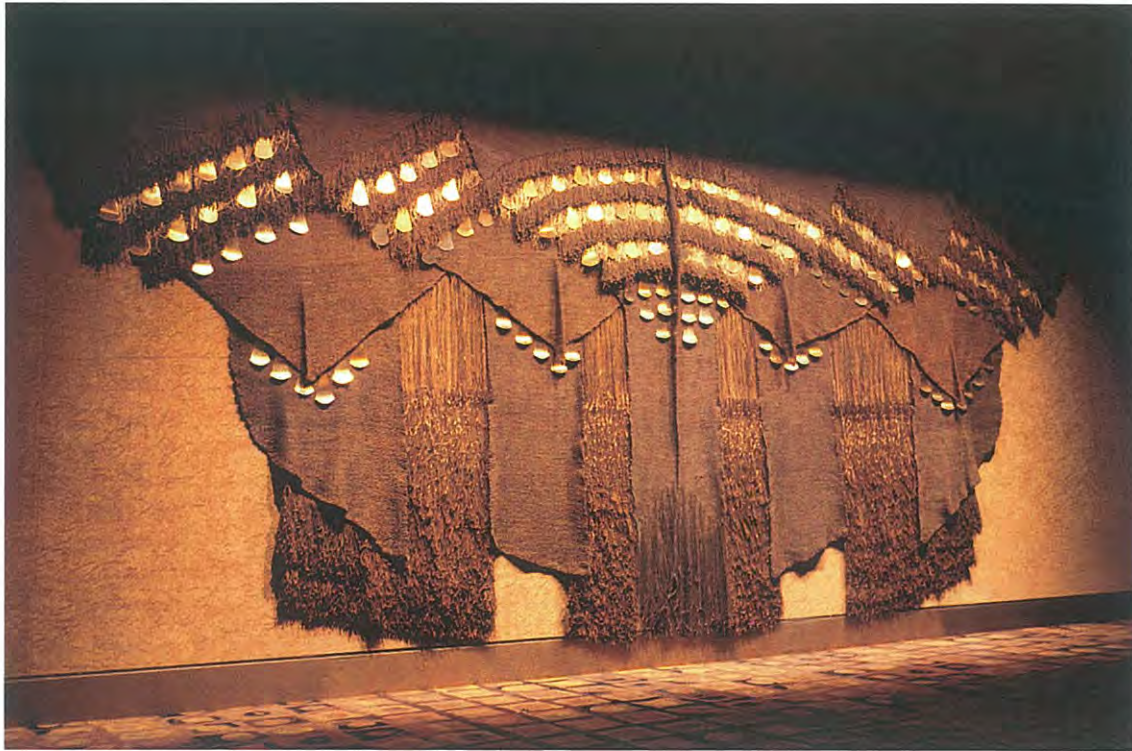


Fig. 41
Robert Bell, *Lassetter's Mirage*, Sheraton-Perth Hotel Golden Ballroom, 1973

In contrast to the increasing involvement of craft artists in the design process of large projects was the first fit-out of the newly established Australia Council Crafts Board's North Sydney offices in 1973. This design scheme included the extensive use of Finnish Artek furniture, designed by Alvar Aalto from the 1930s to the 1950s, as furnishings for its staff offices and Board meeting rooms.³⁵¹ The first such use of this furniture in an

³⁵⁰ Mona Hessing was commissioned to make a tapestry for the University of New South Wales' John Clancy Auditorium in 1971. See description of this in F Bottrell, *Aspects of sensibility: The artist craftsman in Australia*, Jack Pollard Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1972, pp. 90–93. Rinske Car and Robert Bell (the author) were commissioned to make several tapestries for the public rooms of the Sheraton Perth Hotel in 1973. Car's two works were made for the hotel lobby. Bell's two works, *Lasster's Mirage*, were made for the hotel's main Golden Ballroom. All works used Car's and Bell's variations of Finnish *ryijy* knotted-pile techniques.

³⁵¹ The furniture was manufactured by Artek and probably supplied through Russell Whitechurch's Finnish Importing Company in North Sydney, the only source of Artek furniture in Australia at the time. Among the items used were the *No 45/3W* webbing armchair and the *80-Series Aalto Standard* table.

Australian Government office, it signalled a desire to use Aalto's designs as an example of successful craft/design/industry collaboration in the context of the aims of the Crafts Board in particular.³⁵² This choice of such imported product for the prestigious national arts organisation was controversial at the time. Commentary from some in the craft sector suggested that the Australia Council, and its Crafts Board in particular, was more interested in 'elitist' design than it was in demonstrating support for Australian furniture design by commissioning or buying already-developed local products for its headquarters. The semiotics of this placement of high-status imported furniture unequivocally presented a comparative environment that no Australian craftsman could hope to emulate, no matter how much grant support they might receive through the Crafts Board. However, the furniture did serve its intended function as a sympathetic backdrop to the extensive display of works in all media from the Crafts Board's own developing collection of contemporary Australian craft.³⁵³

The interior designers' choice of these furnishings was encouraged by Crafts Board member, Dick Richards, and was made with the support of the ceramicist, Marea Gazzard, the Craft Board's first Chair.³⁵⁴ Her own home in Sydney's Paddington (designed by her husband, the architect Donald Gazzard) used similar furnishings to great effect as a foil for her own sculptural ceramic works. The Artek furniture was still in use in the Australia Council's relocated offices in Redfern, Sydney, up until about 1998 and, despite its high initial cost (even with the probable discounts the Australia Council would have received from the suppliers in return for this exposure of their products), may have proved to be a sound investment.

The craft and design organisations that flourished during the 1970s were usually unable to afford to demonstrate this type and level of support on a permanent basis. In 1971, the lead organisation, the Crafts Council of Australia, had its first headquarters in King Street, Sydney, fitted out on a restricted budget. However it drew upon a Scandinavian approach to functional design through the use of spare, light-coloured wood furniture and open shelving as a foil for the open display of functional and decorative objects and

³⁵² This aim was confirmed by Crafts Board member, Dick Richards, in an interview with the author in Adelaide on 26 August 1996.

³⁵³ After being used in exhibitions and as decoration for Federal Government offices in Australia and overseas, this 900-work collection (known as the Crafts Board of the Australia Council Collection) was gifted to the Australian National Gallery in 1980.

³⁵⁴ Richards confirmed this role in an interview with the author in Adelaide on 26 August 1996.

textiles by Australian craft practitioners (some of which were purchased, others on loan from the Australia Council Crafts Board Collection of contemporary Australian craft). The Council commissioned the design and production of a unique set of modern functional tableware from the senior Australian ceramicist, Les Blakebrough, to be used by staff and its Board members, a perhaps unconscious (but certainly learned) reference to the Art and Crafts ideals that fuelled the craft revival of the twentieth century.³⁵⁵

Aalto's Artek furniture was again seen in one of Australian architect Glenn Murcutt's earliest houses, the 1972 Laurie Short house in Terrey Hills, NSW, widely published in the architectural and popular design press. It signalled an affinity with the spare but confidently detailed structuralism of Murcutt's work and that of the Finnish architect. The house, like many of Murcutt's later works, was sited in Sydney's outer northern suburbs and the use of the Artek furniture (in an unexpected non-urban design context) underscored his design work and began to link it visually and conceptually with Aalto's great and well-known country houses in Finland. Murcutt was not the first Australian architect to specify, or influence the owners' choice of, Aalto-designed furniture, but the wide publicity of his houses and their furnishings has influenced many others to follow suit. Murcutt was awarded the prestigious Alvar Aalto Medal for his work in 1995. Murcutt's biographer, Philip Drew, draws connections between the architect's structures and the furniture within them:

Finnish crafts, and Aalto's furniture, also attracted Murcutt's attention...in owning something which Aalto had designed, he felt himself somehow closer to the architect's mind, more able to share in the creation of such excellence. Artek furniture, light, precise and made of wood, was well suited to Australian summer conditions. Moreover, it demonstrated some of those same qualities of delicacy and strength which Glenn Murcutt saw in the branches, leaves and buds, especially the buds, of the eucalypt. The furniture was light, and so too are Glenn Murcutt's houses.³⁵⁶

Such exposure and architectural endorsement exposure created a market revival for Artek in Australia from the 1980s, as did the worldwide promotion of Aalto's work leading to the centenary of his birth in 1998. Its prime retailer in Australia, Anibou (established by Sydney architect Neil Burley), now anchors its business in Artek sales,

³⁵⁵ This set is still in use in the Crafts Council of Australia's headquarters in Canberra. One place setting is also in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum.

³⁵⁶ P Drew, *Leaves of iron: Glenn Murcutt: Pioneer of Australian architectural form*, The Law Book Company Ltd, Sydney, 1985, p. 20.

carrying with it a program of promotion of the work of younger Australian furniture designers working with a similar stylistic language. These include Caroline Casey (b.1964 Australia), Leslie John Wright (1950–2006 Australia) and Tony Stuart (b.1962 Australia). Each of these designer/makers has acknowledged an early awareness of Scandinavian design in the formulation of their work in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁵⁷

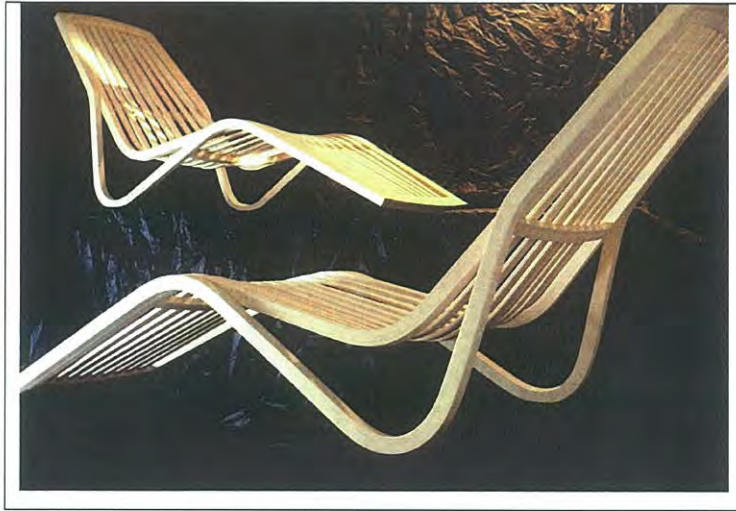


Fig 42
Leslie John Wright *Shoreline Chair*



Fig 43
Caroline Casey *Elliptical Folding Screen*, 1994

³⁵⁷ Casey's work is discussed in J Richardson, 'Caroline in the city', *Australian Magazine*, 18 July 1998, p. 34, in which Casey states '...growing up in the seventies where every kid had a purple or lime green bedroom...[o]ur house was just full of colour and bold Finlandia prints and Marimekko.' Leslie Wright's design sketchbooks include notes on his observations of Alvar Aalto's design work. (Leslie John Wright Archive, NGA Research Library).

As the most important work by the Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, the Sydney Opera House loomed, from its inception in 1957 to its completion in 1974, as a visual and material backdrop for discussions on the nature of Scandinavian design and its relationship to the Australian context. As the most controversial new public building commissioned in Australia, it was a highly visible subject for public and professional discussion on all aspects of the design process. Commentators and critics discussed the role and authority of visionary architects in relation to the government and the client; the interpretation of the site by a non-Australian; the resolution of conflict between form and function; the challenges of its construction; and the eventual polarisation of the design profession in relation to government, resulting from Utzon's dramatic departure from the project.³⁵⁸ While further discussion of this project is beyond the scope of this thesis, the construction of the Sydney Opera House during the period of peak exposure to Scandinavian design in Australia provides an authoritative backdrop to the marketing of Scandinavian-designed goods—Danish-designed and made articles in particular—during this period. Its visceral and growing presence made tangible a particular Scandinavian interpretation of a powerful site as a stage for Australian endeavour.

In 1995 a reassessment of Utzon's 1957–67 design work for the Opera House resulted in an exhibition and publication (in the form of computer-generated, animated graphic visualisations) of his unrealised interior design schemes for the building, drawing renewed attention to its Danish design heritage.³⁵⁹ At the same time, the redesign of the interior of the Opera House's main restaurant, the *Bennelong*, by architect Leigh Prentice, reclaimed the building's 'Danish-ness' through the use of Arne Jacobsen's 1957 Swan chairs and Louis Poulsen's 1957 Artichoke lamps, wittily inverted, perhaps as a comment on the antipodean fervour of the late 1950s in Australia. The original furnishings of this restaurant were custom-designed in the corporate style of the early 1970s and did not reflect Danish design themes and Danish-designed and manufactured products in such an overt way.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Utzon's resignation as architect of the Sydney Opera House is discussed in detail in P Drew, 'A conspiracy of nobodies', *The masterpiece: Jørn Utzon: A secret life*, Hardie Grant Books, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 348–367.

³⁵⁹ P Drew, *Utzon and the Sydney Opera House*, InSPIRE Press, Sydney, 2000, p. 140. The computer imaging of the interiors was executed by Philip Nobis and included in *The unseen Utzon* exhibition in the Sydney Opera House Exhibition Hall from 1 November 1994 to 30 June 1995 and curated by John Murphy.

³⁶⁰ The new interior was opened on 23 August 1995.



Fig. 44
Interior of the *Bennelong* restaurant at the Sydney Opera House showing Jacobsen's Swan chairs and Henningens's inverted Artichoke lamps

The consistent placement of Danish Bang & Olufsen (B&O) hi-fi and electronic products in contemporary interiors since the introduction of its range to Australia in 1968 has successfully linked the company's products with advanced design and architectural innovation. The earliest examples of the company's products to be seen widely in Australia were elegant exercises in restraint and minimalism, using rosewood and satin-finished stainless steel, with precise, slide-rule like controls suggesting a heightened technical awareness and connoisseurship of music on the part of the owner. B&O stood apart from the increasing market penetration of Japanese audio products and was the only European manufacturer to successfully offer a consistent range of non-specialist audio equipment to Australian consumers, engendering a cult-like following and brand loyalty, despite its high costs. The company's recent products have been more aggressively designed, by Danish and non-Danish designers, and are prized as functional sculpture in contemporary interiors.³⁶¹ The brand remains independent, linking Danish design with concepts of technical quality and innovation. Its impact in Australia has not been on the design of audio equipment to any great extent, but more as an indicator that the market for home audio equipment can support products in which

³⁶¹ Bang & Olufsen's history is discussed in B Polster, 'Bang & Olufsen', in *Design directory Scandinavia*, Pavilion, London, 1999, pp. 129–132.

the quality of visual design is paramount. The brand has also been linked to the arts through references in its advertising and promotional material to the fact that items from its range have regularly been acquired as examples of ‘good design’ by influential museums such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Association of environmental awareness and social responsibility developed in the marketing of Swedish motor vehicles in Australia. Volvo and Saab passenger cars were introduced to the Australian market in the early 1960s. The Volvo *122* sedan and *P1800* sports coupé, sold from 1961, and the Saab *99*, sold from 1963, were promoted on the basis of their durability, safety features and design that was distinctly apart from the fashionable excesses of mainstream of car styling of the time.³⁶² The design of both vehicles (throughout their model ranges) stressed functionalism and practicality and, in the case of Saab, sporting associations such as rally driving, deriving from the company’s successes in that field. The promotional literature of both brands linked their products to active family lifestyle values and environmental awareness and responsibility.

The Volvo company continued to introduce safety innovations, often at the expense of aesthetic appeal, and by the late 1990s promotional literature and advertising for the company’s vehicles continued to stress contemporary environmental consciousness such as its program of recycling of vehicle components and low-impact manufacturing processes. During the 1990s the introduction of more modern designs by British designer, Graham Horbury, interpreting design themes from the company’s unpretentious vehicles of the 1950s, sent different signals, reinforced by Volvo’s showrooms, which were redesigned in styles and materials to suggest modern Scandinavian design.³⁶³

³⁶² Volvo was introduced to the Australian market by Antill’s Swedish Motor Importers Pty Ltd in Sydney. In 1969, Swedish Motors and AB Volvo created Volvo Australia Pty Ltd to market cars, trucks, buses, marine and industrial engines and earthmoving equipment, under Managing Director, Per Eriksson.

³⁶³ As an example, see ‘Here comes the all-new V70’, *Volvo Magazine*, *ibid.*, pp. 24–31.

16. Free agents: entrepreneurship and the role of the individual in propagating Scandinavian design

The subjects discussed here, particularly those in relation to the introduction of Scandinavian design to Australia, are linked through the work and dedicated efforts of a very few individuals. By the early 1960s there were in every major Australian city one or two people (or at most a very few) involved in the business of importing and retailing Scandinavian products. Almost uniformly well-connected, well-travelled and often working with a reformist zeal in the matter of the promotion of modern design, and motivated by a desire to build their businesses, they often acted as go-betweens between the companies they represented and design organisations and art museums in the matter of promotional exhibitions and acquisitions. As such, they were able to influence the tastes, and the decisions on purchases for their homes, of a new class and generation of consumer. All were operating at the time of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition's development and most found ways to align their business activities, and enhance their entrepreneurial roles, with the heightened awareness and validation of Scandinavian design that flowed from its art museum presentations in Australia.

By the 1960s the sector's most influential agents were Marion Hall Best (Marion Best Pty Ltd), Harland Hogan (Harland L Hogan & Sons), Raoul Baudish (Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd), George Molnar (Artes Studios), Axel Rappe (Scandinavia House and Vasa Agencies) and Russell Whitechurch (Finnish Importing Company) in Sydney. David Foulkes Taylor (David Foulkes Taylor) and Alfred Knee (Decor Design Centre) operated in Perth; Bruce Anderson (Anderson's), Vin Riley (Buckley's Homewares Store), F Aitken-Petersen (Danish Design), Anthony Urban (Forum) and Merlin Cunliffe (Thesaurus) in Melbourne and Karen Lemercier (the Design Centre) in Adelaide.

Raoul Baudish's proactive role in the negotiations for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition has been discussed in Chapter 1, and here I will discuss the work of David Foulkes Taylor in Perth, Bruce Anderson in Melbourne and Axel Rappe in Sydney. Each are examples of the influential role played by commercial agents in the promotion of modern design in those cities, particularly in relationship to the growing interest in the field by the Western Australian Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Victoria as a result of their staging of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

I will discuss the work of Marion Hall Best and Russell Whitechurch, as influential importers in Sydney, and others whose work in promoting Scandinavian design facilitated connections between designers and cultural agencies. I will also examine the writing of the interior designer, Margaret Lord, whose books on interior design lauded the work of Scandinavian designers.

The previously mentioned 1888 activities of the Swedish agent, Mr Parelius, working as a highly active and entrepreneurial individual agent operating between cultural and commercial interests, may be seen as a precursor to the work of the Sydney importers of Scandinavian goods in the 1960s, Raoul Baudish and Axel Rappe.³⁶⁴ Rappe's work in Australia was the outcome of an extended visit to Australia from 1938 to 1939 by his mother, Baroness Hedvig Rappe, whose work while here bears some examination as an example of the successful agency of an individual in promoting Swedish craft and design.

Hedvig Rappe (Countess Hedvig Eleonora Margaretha Posse, 1897–1972 Sweden) arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia on 1 March 1938, en route to Adelaide.³⁶⁵ With her was her eldest son, fifteen-year old Baron Claes-Fredrik Rappe, and Miss Olive Moller, a South Australian from Glenelg, returning home after spending four years in Scandinavia, including some time in Sweden as nanny to Rappe's children. Rappe supervised her family's forestry business in Jonköping, where her husband, Baron Gerhard Alexis Rappe (1894–1974 Sweden), was the chief of its agricultural research institute. The trip was to allow Claes-Fredrik to recuperate after an illness, by spending time on a farm in Renmark, South Australia. Rappe had brought with her a collection of Swedish crafts—glass, pottery, pewter and woodcraft—which she planned to exhibit in Australia. From her forestry association, she had a particular interest in woodcrafts, and brought with her decorative and functional carved wood objects for display and discussion. In Adelaide, at Traveller House, she exhibited this collection, which included Strömbergshyttan and Skansen glass, Rörstrand porcelain, Nittsjö ceramics, Liljeholmen tapers and candleholders and small handcrafted objects from the state and privately supported homecrafts organisation, *Svenska Hemslojdförening* of Stockholm, Jönköping and Kalmar.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Axel Rappe's work in Sydney during the 1960s is discussed later in this chapter.

³⁶⁵ Perth Women's Correspondent, 'Swedish Baroness on way to S.A.: Bringing son to recuperate from illness', *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 2 March 1938. ARP

³⁶⁶ 'Swedish art and tradition in handicraft', *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 30 March 1938. ARP

With Moller, she also toured regional areas of South Australia, setting up her exhibit in country towns and giving talks on Swedish crafts, while at the same time assembling a collection of Aboriginal artefacts (from Aboriginal settlements in SA) and natural history specimens which she displayed in Swedish museums on her return.³⁶⁷

In May 1938, Rappe and Moller travelled on to Melbourne, where an article in the *Sun* noted:

Passing through Melbourne on their way to Sydney, which is their destination, Baroness Rappe and Miss Moller took the opportunity of a week's stay to display a collection of Swedish pewter, pottery, glassware and woodwork. Every piece in the collection is hand-wrought and just a sample of the Swedish craftwork they hope to popularise in Australia ... Miss Moller will remain in Sydney, where she will open a Swedish arts and crafts centre ... In the pottery and glassware, there are pieces for the table and ornaments for decoration ... With the Swedish ware there is an appreciable tendency to avoid excessive ornamentation. The glassware is not fragile, but is beautiful in its solidity and elusive colourings.³⁶⁸

Rappe and Moller were intrepid travellers, undertaking their journeys in Australia in a Model-T Ford. Shortly after arriving in Sydney in mid-May 1938, they established the shop, Swedish Arts and Crafts, at 9 King's Cross Road, King's Cross, where their business card advertised 'Exclusive imported glass and crystal: Pottery and carved woodwork: Lovely hand-woven cloths and rugs: Wonderful range best quality candles'. Rappe also imported Swedish and Finnish indigenous Sami crafts, such as engraved bone objects and ornaments, seeing a connection between such objects and the Australian indigenous crafts that she had collected. This was the first store in Australia to specialise in Swedish products and joined the small group of specialist design shops that had started to supply a new type of modern crafted product to the Sydney market.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ Rappe's travel and activity in Australia was detailed in an article, 'Vardag på andra sedan jordklotet', in the Swedish women's journal, *Svensk Damtidning*, no. 51, 17 December 1938, pp. 14–15, 31, 32. ARP.

³⁶⁸ N McMahon, 'Sweden, land of lakes and low telephone charges: Australian girl's impressions', *Sun News-Pictorial*, 7 May 1938, p. 52. ARP.

³⁶⁹ One of the first modern design shops in Sydney was Notanda, in Rowe Street, operated from 1936 by the artist Margo Lewers (1908–1978 Australia). Lewers sold hand-printed textiles, ceramics and furniture of her own design and would most certainly have known about the Swedish Arts and Crafts shop and its proprietor, Hedvig Rappe. Lewers' son-in-law, the Danish silversmith, Helge Larsen, was later to join with Rappe's younger son, Axel Rappe, in the establishment of the Craft Association of Australia.

Axel Rappe noted that the Sydney interior designer Marion Hall Best was an early customer of the store.³⁷⁰ Best had started her own design shop in 1938 in Rowe Street, Sydney, and was later to become a leading figure in the promotion and supply of Scandinavian-designed interior furnishings. Rappe began to supply other businesses with Swedish goods, including the Melbourne firm of Swedak, operated by CJ Kersey from 1 September 1938.³⁷¹



Fig. 45
Swedish Arts and Crafts shop in Rowe Street, Sydney, c.1939

The impending crisis of probable war in Europe and the need to return to her family's business interests forced Hedvig Rappe and her son to return to Sweden in October 1939, travelling via Melbourne, where she had organised a display of Swedish glass and handicrafts at the Victorian Arts and Crafts Society Annual exhibition at the Melbourne Town Hall.³⁷² Moller continued to run the business until about 1940, when the war in Europe broke contact between Australia and Sweden and the supply of stock from Sweden could not be maintained. Moller returned to South Australia and later married, becoming Olive Carrington. The efforts of the two women, aided by Rappe's social position while in Sydney, had brought Swedish crafts and design to prominence in the city's growing modernist design sector.

³⁷⁰ Noted in correspondence from Axel Rappe to Grace Cochrane, 2006, ARP.

³⁷¹ Letters from Kersey to Rappe, ARP.

³⁷² 'Tea party for Baroness', *Age*, October 1939. The VACS arranged a reception for Hedvig Rappe prior to its exhibition, held from October 13–22 1938, ARP.



Figs 46, 47, 48

left: Bruce Anderson 1952

centre: David Foulkes Taylor c.1964

right: Axel Rappe 1961

An example of the influence of a single person in setting an agenda to promote design was the work of the Perth retailer and design entrepreneur David Foulkes Taylor (1929–1966 Australia). He was the first to introduce Scandinavian-designed merchandise to Perth in his shop and Triangle Gallery in the riverside suburb of Crawley from 1957. Scandinavian products had been introduced to Western Australia by the Perth department store, Aherns, early in the 1950s (possibly under Foulkes Taylor’s influence when he was employed by the store in 1954, in its furniture department). However, Foulkes Taylor was the first in Perth to structure a business on the principles underpinning modernism and a celebration of the work and philosophies of Scandinavian (and also Italian and American) designers.³⁷³

His admiration, expressed in an essay while a student at Geelong Grammar School, under the tutelage of the German émigré, Bauhaus-trained artist and teacher, Ludwig Hirschfield-Mack, for the work of the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto indicated an early interest in design work: ‘I should like to live a Bohemian life in Paris for a couple of years with some architect. I venerate Alvar Aalto very much as I do also to Germany’s Walter Gropius and France’s Le Corbusier.’³⁷⁴ Ludwig Hirschfield-Mack was a graduate of the Munich Academy of Art, and a student and teacher at the Bauhaus design school in Dessau. He emigrated to England in 1936, was interned at the outbreak of WWII and sent to Australia in 1940 on the ship *Dunera*. Geelong Grammar’s

³⁷³ Foulkes Taylor’s design career, his exposure to Scandinavian design and its influence on his taste is discussed in A Russell, ‘The designer craftsman’, in P Duffy, *The Foulkes Taylor years*, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Perth, 1982, pp. 29–33.

³⁷⁴ David Foulkes Taylor, quoted by P Duffy, ‘An eclectic background’, *ibid.*, p. 16.

administrators, alerted to his arrival and internment, recognised his qualifications and offered him a teaching position at the school, where his Bauhaus-influenced theory of learning design through a hands-on approach to materials was propagated.³⁷⁵

After leaving Geelong Grammar in 1946, and following a year of architecture studies at Perth Technical College, with encouragement and support from his wealthy family, Foulkes Taylor undertook design studies in London, a time also used for exhibition visits and extensive travel, including visits to Scandinavia. Foulkes Taylor arrived in London in 1948 to enrol in an Industrial and Furniture Design course at the Central School of Arts and Crafts until 1952. He was exposed during this time to contemporary design in the Festival of Britain exhibitions and in shops beginning to import Scandinavian-designed products. At the 1951 Milan Triennial the Finnish pavilion and display won major accolades which were widely reported in the British and international design press. What was possibly his first exposure to contemporary Scandinavian design in Britain is evidenced in his hand-written margin notes in his copy of the catalogue for the exhibition, *Danish Art Treasures Through the Ages*, held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from 28 October 1948 to 2 January 1949.³⁷⁶

Among the catalogue entries for modern works that Foulkes Taylor annotated were: numbers 581, 582 and 583: 'Bookcase', 'Sideboard' and 'Card table' by Kaare Klint, 1930–38 (the mahogany of which Foulkes Taylor likens to jarrah); numbers 586 and 587: 'Table' and 'Elbow chair' by Mogens Koch 1937 and 1935; number 621: 'Heating table' by Finn Juhl, 1943; and number 624: 'Writing table' by Ole Wanscher, 1947.³⁷⁷ Foulkes Taylor had grown up with his family's collection of fine Western Australian colonial jarrah furniture and, judging from these comments, would have seen some resonances of this in the refined classicism of these pieces of Danish furniture.

³⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

³⁷⁶ This annotated catalogue is in the possession of the author.

³⁷⁷ Victoria and Albert Museum/Danish Ministry of Education, *Danish art treasures through the ages*, Victoria and Albert Museum Exhibition Committee, London, 1948, pp. 141–142, 147.

Exclusive furniture of rich, dark, oiled jarrah
 Designer/ David Foulkes Taylor

See the full range of this superb hand crafted furniture at
 David Foulkes Taylor's Broadway showroom phone 86 6232

Broadway Carver in
 mature oil finished
 jarrah. \$64 (£32) plus cover.

Circular Pedestal Table
 Solid jarrah top, 5 ft. diameter.
 \$192 (£96).

Staff Chair in
 rich oiled jarrah
 \$39 (£19/10/0) plus cover.

Fig. 49
 David Foulkes Taylor advertisement, 1966

The promotion of Scandinavian products through design-oriented shops in Britain and the United States presented a model for the way he would operate his own business on his return to Perth in 1954 from study in England. In September 1960, Foulkes Taylor stocked the first imports of furniture from Scandinavia, including furniture by Danish designers, Finn Juhl, Nils Vodder, Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Neilsen, manufactured by France and Son, Denmark. By 1961 Foulkes Taylor also carried products from Danish firms, Jeppeson and Internia, and Knoll International's Model 70 and 74 chairs by the Finnish-American designer, Eero Saarinen. Through his efforts and a network of trade contacts in Scandinavia, the work of other Scandinavian furniture designers such as Grete Jalk, Alvar Aalto and Arne Jacobsen, and textiles, ceramic and glass objects by manufacturers such as Marimekko, Arabia, Iittala, Nuutajärvi, Finel, Orrefors and Holmegaard were able to be seen and purchased in his Perth shop by 1961.

**DAVID
FOULKES TAYLOR**

**33 BROADWAY
NEDLANDS
PHONE 866232**

ARABIA CERAMICS
FINEL ENAMELS
NUUTAJARVI GLASS
LIEKKI FLAMEPROOF
CERAMICS



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CANDLE HOLDER
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LIEKKI COFFEE POT
\$6.25 each



FINEL ENAMEL MUG
\$1.75 each

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9 A.M. TO 6 P.M. WEEK DAYS
9 A.M. TO 1 P.M. SATURDAYS

Fig. 50
David Foulkes Taylor advertisement for Scandinavian merchandise, 1968

He encouraged local craftspeople and designers, such as the potter Eileen Keys and immigrant British furniture makers Charles and Roy Catt to exhibit at his showroom, allowing Perth audiences to evaluate their work in an international context.

The Western Australian potter, Eileen Keys (1903–1989 New Zealand, arrived Australia 1947), who had arrived in Perth in 1947, was the first to produce domestic stoneware ceramics in Western Australia. She had visited the Swedish potter Bernt Friberg, then a designer at the Gustavsberg Pottery, on a visit to Sweden in 1956 and cited Friberg's work as an influence on her functional ceramics of the early 1960s.³⁷⁸

In a promotional exercise in about 1960, Foulkes Taylor invited the Perth artist and jeweller, Geoffrey Allen, to decorate an Arne Jacobsen-designed plywood *Ant* chair

³⁷⁸ For an extensive account of Keys' life and work, see R Bell, *Eileen Keys ceramics*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1986.

from his stock. Allen responded by carving a figural design into the chair back, the result an example of Foulkes Taylor's support for local work and ideas.³⁷⁹

Foulkes Taylor's own furniture design work fused Australian, English and Italian vernacular traditions with the spare formalism typical of Scandinavian design. His innovative designs for his furniture, using Western Australian jarrah, brought it to the forefront of local design, the native wood eliciting a strong and supportive response from his Perth customers. The development of Foulkes Taylor's furniture design ideas was the work of his assistant, David Heymans (b. about 1935 The Netherlands, arrived Perth 1954), who studied architecture and interior design in Perth at Leederville Technical College, from 1955 to 1959, where he met Foulkes Taylor, who was then teaching there. Foulkes Taylor invited Heymans to work for him from 1961 to early 1966 in his new business in Perth's riverside district of Crawley as general assistant and to develop technical details and draw up furniture designs that they had conceived collaboratively. Heymans, well versed in European design trends, established his own practice as an interior designer in Perth in 1966 and remained committed to the use of Scandinavian furniture in his projects.³⁸⁰

Commissioned by local architects to design or supply modern furniture for their projects, Foulkes Taylor had a pervasive influence on interior design in the 'new' Perth of the 1960s.³⁸¹



Fig. 51
David Foulkes Taylor design for University House dining room, University of Western Australia, Perth, 1966

³⁷⁹ This chair is in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

³⁸⁰ See Appendix 11 for details of Foulkes Taylor's career.

³⁸¹ The rapid expansion of the mining industry in Western Australia from the early 1960s spurred the redevelopment of Perth's central business district. The resulting building boom provided local architects and designers with new opportunities for expression.

Following his untimely death in a car accident in Victoria in 1966, his business continued under the ownership of his wife, the American playwright, Maryat Lee, under the renegotiated management of his former manager, Barbara Allen, before being taken over in 1969 by Jim Brant, who continued its focus with a greater emphasis on Finnish and Italian designed products.³⁸² Renaming the store Jim Brant, he continued to sell Foulkes Taylor's designs for jarrah furniture, which were developed and manufactured by Charles Catt & Son. The stocking of Danish furniture was gradually discontinued, with an increased emphasis placed on Finnish products, including Marimekko fabrics, Fiskars scissors and knives, Vuokko fabrics and leisure clothes, Iittala and Nuutajärvi glass, Arabia ceramics, Finel enamelware, Haimi furniture, Liekki ceramics, Artek furniture designed by Alvar Aalto, and Italian-designed furniture and accessories. Brant changed his business profile in 1985 to concentrate on outdoor furniture, and sold the Broadway, Nedlands building to the Mojo advertising agency, which modified its interior.³⁸³

The business career of the Melbourne furniture retailer, Bruce Anderson, offers another example of entrepreneurship in the promotion of Scandinavian design. Born in Melbourne in 1928, a scion of a Melbourne furniture retailing family, whose business, Anderson's, had operated since the late nineteenth century, Anderson attended Geelong Grammar School, where his art teacher was also Ludwig Hirschfield Mack. Like his co-student, David Foulkes Taylor, he absorbed a strong grounding in Bauhaus design principles and would go on to develop the retailing of Scandinavian-designed furniture in the 1950s. After leaving Geelong Grammar, Anderson worked in the Anderson family furniture factory and in the Myer's workshop with its designers, Fred Ward and Ron Rosenfeldt (b.1919 Australia).³⁸⁴ He travelled to England in 1948, meeting Sydney designer, Gordon Andrews, on the boat and on arrival was offered a job working in the Heals London furnishings store in 1949. Through this, he heard about a position being offered at the Council of Industrial Design, selecting furnishings for the forthcoming Festival of Britain, and was approved by its selection panel for the job on 2 September 1949.

³⁸² David Foulkes Taylor's biography and business career was compiled from his papers in the David Foulkes Taylor Archive at the Art Gallery of Western Australia by Robert Bell in 1997.

³⁸³ The building is now the headquarters of the Western Australian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

³⁸⁴ See discussion on the career of Fred Ward in *Fred Ward: A selection of furniture and drawings*, Australian National University Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, 1996.

He started working under Alex Gardner-Medwin in the Council of Industrial Design's fabric section, where he met leading architects and designers, including (through the Melbourne architect, Neil Clerehan) the Australian architect, writer and critic, Robin Boyd, who talked to him about Sweden and his enthusiasm for Swedish design and architecture. Lecturers at the Royal Institute of British Architects also helped Anderson 'get in touch with modernist ideas', stimulating his interest in developments in Scandinavia.³⁸⁵

By the time the Festival of Britain exhibition opened in 1951, Anderson was working in its Information Office, through which he met numerous architects and designers visiting England for the event. These included Åke Huldt (Head of the *Svenska Slöjdföreningen*, and later, from 1980 to 1983, to become President of the World Crafts Council) and his assistant, Erik Berglund. Anderson maintained a friendship with Berglund, staying with him in Sweden after the 1951 exhibition closed and visiting Malmö and Copenhagen with him. He also met the Swedish furniture designer, Bruno Mathsson (1907–1988 Sweden), and went with him to visit the Dux factory in Småland, where Mathsson's work was (and where some designs still are) produced. While travelling in Prague in 1950, he met by chance another traveller, the young Swedish politician, Olof Palme. In 1973 Anderson wrote to Palme (by then Prime Minister of Sweden), reminding him of their meeting, and kept the late Palme's cordial reply as a personal connection to Sweden.³⁸⁶

Anderson returned to Melbourne in 1952, 'sweeping floors' in the family business before inaugurating its contemporary furniture department in 1952. The company had been associated with conservative and traditional furniture styles up to this time and Anderson was keen to bolster its image, and promote his initiatives, by writing articles about Scandinavian modern design for the *Furnishing Journal*³⁸⁷ and popular magazines such as *Australian Home Beautiful*, while maintaining contacts with designers and architects such as Robin Boyd. In 1953, he wrote an article in the *Australian Home Beautiful* on the National Gallery of Victoria's recent acquisitions of

³⁸⁵ Anderson's career details from an interview with the author in Melbourne on 20 October 1998.

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*

³⁸⁷ 'Viewpoint: Furniture design overseas: Sweden' and 'Viewpoint: Furniture design overseas: Denmark', *Furnishing Journal*, April 1952.

Danish chairs, which he had selected for acquisition on behalf of the Gallery while travelling in Europe.³⁸⁸

Anderson's first real contact with Swedish design in Australia was through meeting delegates in a visiting deputation in about 1956 from the *Svenska Slöjdföreningen* (the Swedish Society of Industrial Design). He began to draw upon his Swedish connections to develop import stock for Andersons' new modern furniture department, bringing the furniture out direct from Sweden. The first imports were chairs from the Dux company, including designs such as the *T107* armchair by Bruno Mathsson, which he had seen in production while in Sweden. A competitor for this market was the Melbourne store, Georges, which also began to import Scandinavian furniture, mostly from Danish manufacturers including Fritz Hansen's knock-down *AX* chair, designed by Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Nielsen (the first knock-down design to achieve international exposure and market success). Because such furniture could be brought into Australia in space-efficient, knock-down form, import and freight charges, and therefore the final retail price, could be kept lower. Furniture such as this began to be placed by architects, such as Robin Boyd, in the interiors of their houses, photographs of which appeared in Australian architecture journals and popular home furnishing magazines, creating an association of Scandinavian furniture with adventurous modern architecture.³⁸⁹

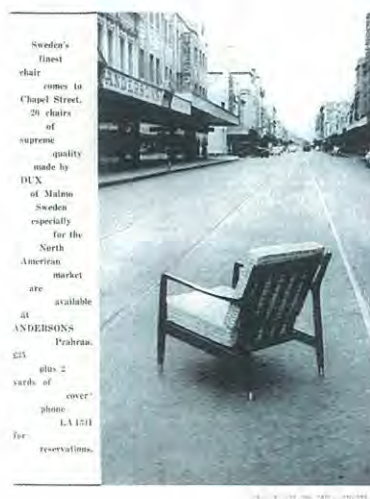


Fig. 52

Anderson's advertisement for Dux furniture, *Architecture and Arts*, January 19 1956. Anderson was also involved in the reproduction of some Scandinavian furniture.

³⁸⁸ B Anderson, 'Felton Bequest brings us distinguished Danish chairs', *Australian Home Beautiful*, June, 1953, pp. 21–22.

³⁸⁹ Serle, op. cit., illustration of *AX* chairs in the interior of Boyd's 1955–1957 house for Mr and Mrs Kenneth Myer, p. 188.

One notable instance was when Anderson was approached in 1959 by the interior designer, Bettine Grounds, the wife of Roy Grounds, who was the architect of the newly completed, dome-shaped Academy of Science in Canberra (now known as the Shine Dome). For this building's interior, Grounds wished to source copies of the famous 1949 *Round Chair*, by Danish designer, Hans Wegner (1914–2007 Denmark), which the Grounds' had seen in Hong Kong. Anderson sought permission from the chair's manufacturer, Fritz Hansen, to make the chair under license in Australia, as he feared that poor, unauthorised copies would be produced anyway by other manufacturers in Australia (a correct assumption: an inferior copy was made in Western Australia by the furniture manufacturer, WH & R Hawkins). As Fritz Hansen did not respond, Anderson took the initiative to use the example of Wegner's Round Chair from the National Gallery of Victoria's collection as the model for a copy to be produced by the Victorian furniture manufacturer, Danish De Luxe.

As an earlier advisor to the Gallery, Anderson had selected this actual chair for acquisition in 1952 and presumably was permitted to use it as a model through his connections with the NGV's curators and management. The copies were made for the Academy of Sciences and these furnishings are still in place as part of the overall interior furnishing scheme designed by the Design Unit, under Fred Ward, at the Australian National University. Danish De Luxe subsequently introduced this copy—made in Australian blackwood instead of the original's European oak or teak—into its catalogue as the *Denmark Chair* in 1959. Some time after this, Fritz Hansen did respond and threatened to sue for plagiarism, forbidding reproduction of the Round Chair. Danish De Luxe challenged the suit and the matter lapsed.³⁹⁰



Figs 53, 54
left: Interior of the Shine Dome (formerly the Australian Academy of Science), Canberra
right: Danish de Luxe *Denmark* chair, 1959

³⁹⁰ Bruce Anderson interview with the author, *ibid.*

This is only one example of the unauthorised copying of Scandinavian furniture that was rife in Australia during this period, instigated in a number of cases by architects or interior designers unable to source originals at reasonable cost. The weakness of copyright protection for overseas manufacturers and designers within Australia meant that overseas designs were readily appropriated and produced locally, incorporating a few minor modifications to show a ‘difference’ from the originals.³⁹¹

Despite the copyright transgression involving the reproduction of the *Round Chair*, Anderson became interested in the possibility of manufacturing quality modern furniture in Australia on the Scandinavian model. He was particularly inspired in this by the work of Erik Berglund, who had become the founding director of the Swedish Furniture Institute in 1967. The Institute’s research on ergonomics and wear testing of domestic furniture had become an industry standard. Anderson invited Berglund to Australia in 1976, where he visited the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to see if it could meet the standards of his testing programs in Australia and provide technical assistance for local production.

Anderson continued to visit Sweden often, taking the architect for his new store (in Springvale Road, Mulgrave, Victoria) with him for ideas. As a result of this interest, Andersons was approached in 1976 by the Swedish furniture manufacturer/retailer, IKEA, to start its first full store in Australia, with Anderson running it as a franchise under IKEA’s direction.³⁹² To that time, IKEA had only a small presence in Australia through a boutique store in the northern Sydney suburb of Artarmon.³⁹³

Anderson entered into this partnership with the intention that Australian-produced products would also be stocked in the IKEA store, rather than it just being an importing company. IKEA management stated that it expected that any Australian content in its stock would take five years to achieve (even though the Berglund visit had revealed that the exacting Swedish furniture testing methods used by IKEA could be replicated in Australia). However, this local content did not eventuate, leaving Anderson feeling disillusioned and manipulated by IKEA’s management in Sweden. He held a view that IKEA’s Swedish directors had a poor opinion of (and an unwillingness to accept)

³⁹¹ The Commonwealth of Australia introduced the Designs Act in 1906 to give copyright protection to the designer of a registered object.

³⁹² Bruce Anderson interview with the author, op. cit.

³⁹³ IKEA (the trading acronym for Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd) was founded by Ingvar Kamprad in Sweden in 1943.

Australia's ability to manufacture quality product and actively discouraged or ignored initiatives from local franchisees. By about 1982, IKEA wanted expensive expansion of the store, a move not supported by Anderson, who felt that to do so under a five-year franchise deal was not prudent. As a result, in 1983, Anderson sold his shares in Andersons to his cousins and left the company.³⁹⁴

The third example of a retailer promoting Scandinavian design is the Swedish immigrant, Baron Axel Ludvig Gerhardson Rappe (b. Sweden 1936, also known as Axel L G:son Rappe). He was the youngest son of Baroness Hedvig Rappe, who had introduced Swedish crafts to Australia during her 18-month visit from 1938 to 1939. An interest in the use of wood through his family's forestry business in Småland, Sweden, drew him towards forestry administration studies in the early 1950s. His mother's positive experience and connections in Australia led to him to Western Australia in 1958, where he worked for the Western Australian Karri Timber Company in Nannup, and studied the hardwood business.³⁹⁵

In 1959, he moved to Sydney to find work in the design field, initially contacting his mother's friend and previous client, the interior designer, Marion Hall Best. Best recommended Rappe to Oscar Lenau, a Dane whose business, Scandinavian Style, imported, wholesaled and manufactured a range of Scandinavian goods. Lenau took Rappe on as an art, interior and design adviser, giving him responsibility for the promotion of the company's separate line, String Pty Ltd, retailing the Swedish *String* modular wall storage system, which it wholesaled and manufactured under license in New South Wales.³⁹⁶ Rappe later became assistant manager and art director of the company, returning to Sweden and Denmark in 1960 to source exhibits for the company's display in the 1961 Sydney International Trade Fair's Danish Pavilion, which had been designed by him.

³⁹⁴ Bruce Anderson interview with the author, Melbourne, 1998. These recollections from Anderson are difficult to verify as other parties involved are deceased. His views on IKEA were undoubtedly coloured by the nature and outcomes of his business dealings with the company, but are credible, first-hand accounts nonetheless. Anderson's recollections, from this interview, are included here in order to place his entrepreneurial role in a broader context.

³⁹⁵ Rappe's biographical details confirmed in a telephone interview with the author on 13 October 2007.

³⁹⁶ The *String* system was designed by Nisse and Kajsa Strinning as a competition entry in 1949. Its production version, a highly successful line, was available in flat-packed kits for home assembly.

While Rappe was in Europe, Lenau, facing severe financial difficulties resulting from the 1959 credit squeeze, contacted him, asking him to return to take over the company.³⁹⁷

Rappe returned to Sydney and restructured the company, opening it as a retail business, Scandinavia House. He created a new, separate wholesale business, Vasa Agencies Pty Ltd, to be managed by a Dane, Jørgen Rasmussen.³⁹⁸ Rappe set up the retail operation at 428–432 New South Head Road, Double Bay, in 1960. The new showroom was named Scandinavia House, opening on 15 September 1961.³⁹⁹

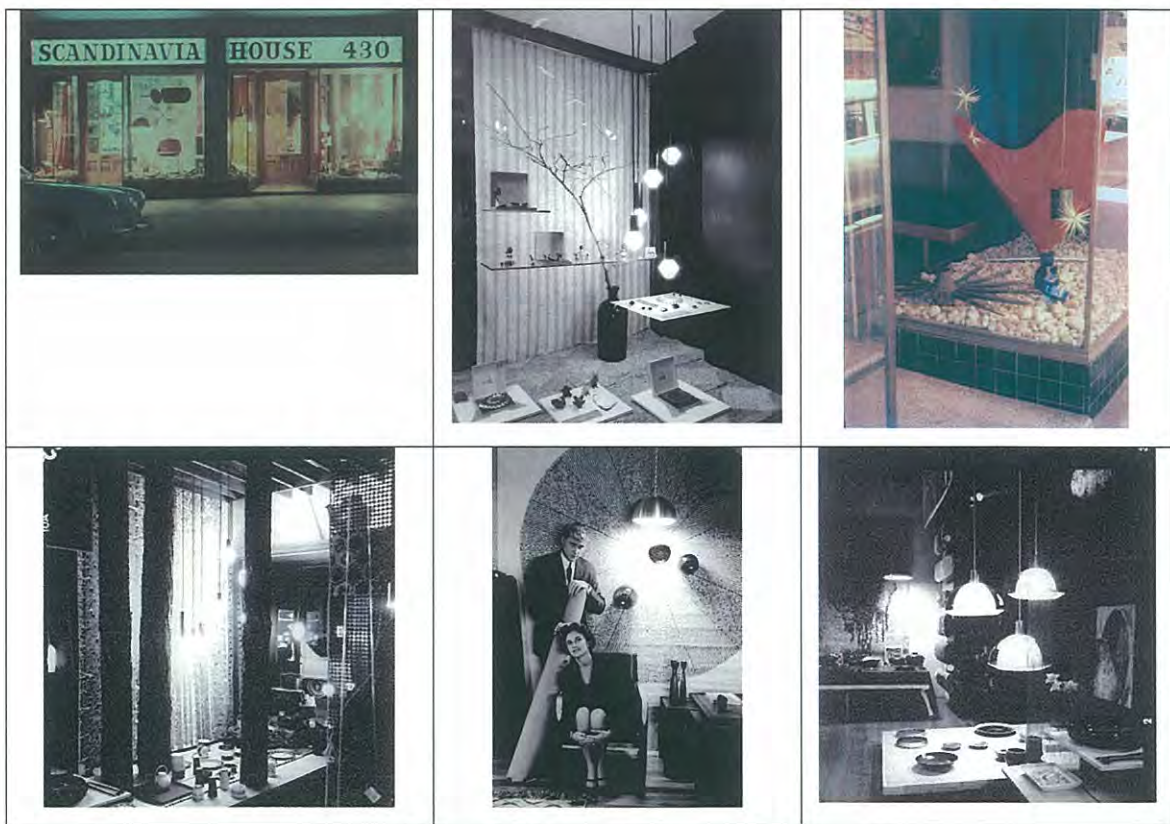


Fig. 55 Scandinavia House, Sydney, with views of *Suomi 1963* exhibition. Centre photo, bottom, is of Axel Rappe and Gillian Broinowski-Rappe 1962

³⁹⁷ Lenau returned to Copenhagen, where he became the export manager for the Danish Sugar Corporation. ARP.

³⁹⁸ Vasa Agencies Pty Ltd was located at 316 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW, and was the agent for the following Danish brands: Kastrup Glasvaerk (glass), Pukebergs Glasbruk (glass), P.Bröste (arts and crafts), Brdr. Rasmussen (ceramics and teak ware), Borge Damgaard Petersen (pewter and silver jewellery), Gerda Nordby (hand printed textiles), Den Permanente (Danish crafts), Louis Poulsen (light fittings), Rafa and Nymolle (stoneware and ceramics) and Edel Erstad (seasonal decorations). It also handled Swedish brands Arvid Böhlmarks Lampfabrik (light fittings), Camlestadens (textiles), Liljeholmens Stearinfabriks (candles), Scandifurn (furniture) and Finnish cutlery by Fiskars.

³⁹⁹ Rappe's career notes compiled from his papers (provided by Grace Cochrane 2007). ARP.

The shop initially stocked a wide range of merchandise from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. Rappe staged *Suomi 1963: Finnish Exhibition*, a large in-store exhibition of Finnish products sourced through several agents, including his close colleague, Russell Whitechurch, and Raoul Baudish's Incorporated Agencies. Rappe's display design for this exhibition was in the style of Finland's exhibitions at the Milan Triennale, with objects set on low platforms interspersed with enlarged photographs (see fig. 55). Rappe also included a number of Australian products in the showroom, particularly furniture designed in the Scandinavian style.

The shop was modelled on the well-known and highly regarded Copenhagen design centre, Den Permanente (although not on the aspect of its official role of selection and accreditation of Danish-designed products) and stocked a range of Den Permanente's Danish-designed and made products. The showroom became a focus for modern design in Sydney, and Rappe operated it until his lease expired in 1964. He moved to Paddington and from 1965 to 1967 undertook interior and shop design commissions. In 1966 worked for the Copenhagen Hotel-Restaurant in King's Cross, whose proprietor, a Mr Levin, initiated negotiations with the Swedish Chamber of Commerce to establish a permanent version of a Scandinavia House on two floors of his hotel in Sydney.⁴⁰⁰ He intended this to be a 'partner' to a design centre and museum for Australian design and craft in a warehouse building that Rappe had found in Hargrave Street, Paddington, where a future Australian craft organisation could be based. He returned to Sweden in 1968 to raise funds for this project, a company that was to be called *Design 69*, but family obligations kept him there and he was not to return to Australia until 2006. Rappe regularly took part in trade exhibitions and sought opportunities to promote the Scandinavian-designed products he represented in a variety of promotional events:

In two weeks' time [24–25 May 1967], television cameras will move into Sydney's uncompleted Opera House to record the first show staged in this architectural phenomenon. Denmark, the country that produced its controversial designer, Joern [Jørn] Utzon, is partly responsible for this beat-the-gun opening ... The Australian Wool Board, which is hiring the almost finished drama theatre of the Opera House for a two-day exhibition of local and Danish wool products, is paying a rental of \$250 ... the object is an exhibition to promote Australian wool and to show with what skill the

⁴⁰⁰ Rappe's cousin, Gösta af Petersens, was the Swedish Ambassador to Australia from about 1963, and was a member of the Committee of Honour for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. ARP.

Danes have applied it to fabrics and furnishings ... Baron Axel Rappe, a Swedish-born designer, is in charge of organising the Danish display.⁴⁰¹

This exhibition, *Harmony in Living*, included furnishings, fashion garments, carpets, rugs, light fittings and craft objects and had been organised and previously shown in Denmark by the International Wool Secretariat and the Copenhagen design store, Illums Bolighus in conjunction with Danish fashion designer, Carola.⁴⁰² This short event was the first to make a tangible link between Danish applied arts, crafts and industrial design with the Opera House.



Fig. 56
Promotional photograph for the *Harmony in Living* exhibition at the Sydney Opera House, 1967

Rappe also took his message to regional areas. In November 1960, at the invitation of the Bathurst Society of Music and Arts, he arranged an exhibition, *Swedish Design and Crafts*, drawn from Scandinavian Style's products, in Bathurst, supporting this with a lecture on Swedish design. This was probably the first time that Swedish craft and

⁴⁰¹ 'First income for Opera House: Wool Board to pay \$250 rent', *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 9 May 1967, p. 62.

⁴⁰² The opening event at the Sydney Opera House on 24 and 25 May 1967, was titled *The Total Environment* and included fashion parades of Carola outfits. *Harmony in Living*, was subsequently shown at the Melbourne design store, Design 250.

design had been seen outside the capital cities since Rappe's mother made her exhibition tour in 1938—a point he made during his talk.

Bathurst tonight will become the first country city in Australia to view an exhibition of Swedish design and crafts since the war. Baron Axel Rappe arrived in Bathurst on Saturday to arrange the more than 100 examples of Swedish glass, pottery, stainless steel, etc, in the Red Cross Hall. The Baron will also provide a genuine Swedish Smorgasbord supper, such as never before prepared, except in the capital cities of Australia.⁴⁰³

Rappe was among the first to discuss the idea of forming a craft association in Australia. Well aware of the role of the Swedish Society of Craft and Design in supporting and promoting historical and contemporary crafts, he encouraged prominent Sydney crafts practitioners such as Marea Gazzard and Helge Larsen to develop support for the idea, and subsequently became the Secretary of the Formation Committee of the Craft Association of Australia (New South Wales Branch) in 1964. In 1962, Rappe married Gillian Broinowski, an Australian artist and potter who had worked with him since 1961. They later separated and Rappe returned to Sweden in 1967, visiting the American Crafts Council in New York and *Expo 67* in Montreal on the way.⁴⁰⁴ Rappe's nine years in Australia had given him the opportunity to promote quality design, place a large number of Scandinavian products into the homes of those in Sydney's architecture and design circles and to take a proactive role in the formation of a national craft organisation.⁴⁰⁵

Marion Hall Best (b. Marion Burkitt, 1905–1988 Australia) opened her business, Marion Best Fabrics, at 153 Queen Street, in Woollahra, Sydney in 1938, a shop specialising in contemporary printed textiles by Australian artists and designers. In 1949, she established an interior design business, Marion Hall Best, in the art and design precinct of Rowe Street, Sydney, from which grew her reputation as an importer of modern textiles and furnishings. Her Queen Street shop became Marion Best Pty Ltd, incorporating her interior design studio, and was the major Australian supplier of Finnish Printex textiles and its Marimekko brand of clothing and fabrics.

⁴⁰³ 'Swedish exhibition of design, crafts', *Western Times*, Bathurst, 28 November 1960.

⁴⁰⁴ Rappe's visit to the American Crafts Council was brokered by Marea Gazzard.

⁴⁰⁵ ARP. See further discussion on Rappe's role in the formation of the Craft Association of Australia in Part 3, p. 229.

Best had first encountered the company's designs while visiting the Finnish pavilion at the 1954 Milan Triennale and sent her manager, Dora Sweetapple (who was also Best's sister), to Finland to source supplies and negotiate exclusive importation rights to the brand. In 1958, when, resulting from the devaluation that year of the Finnish *markka* (Finnmark), its well-priced and expressive fabrics began to find an international market, Best found herself with an affordable import and began to specialise in the product. In the United States of America in 1960, a Cape Cod shop, which had imported Marimekko dresses, sold a number of them to Jacqueline Kennedy, who, photographed wearing them during John F Kennedy's Presidential campaign, created wide interest in the brand's egalitarian image.⁴⁰⁶

The bold fabric designs of Marimekko's founder, Armi Ratia, and company designers, Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi, Maija Isola and Annika Rimala added a strong commercial product to Best's business, which had been focused on commissioned interior design projects, and added a strong graphic element to her storefront and window displays in the conservative and architecturally historic streetscape of Woollahra.



Fig. 57
Interior of the Marion Hall Best shop in Queen Street, Woollahra, NSW, 1968, showing display of Marimekko textiles

⁴⁰⁶ H Hedqvist & R Tarschys, 'Thoughts on the international reception of Marimekko', in M Aav (ed.), *Marimekko: Fashion fabrics architecture*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2003, p. 162.

Best's own design style relied heavily on her adventurous use of colour, particularly through the application of jewel-like painted glazes to already intense wall and ceiling colours. Marimekko fabrics, used in large expanses to exploit the supergraphic nature of their designs, gave Best's shop clients the chance to associate themselves and their homes to the exclusive commission work for which she was known. Best also stocked Marimekko clothing lines for men, women and children, in the company's trademark printed cottons and striped, woven cotton jerseys. The buyers and wearers of these comfortable garments with their distinctive bold designs created 'walking advertisements' for the brand, and Best's business. In 1961, she designed a '20th Century Room', as part of the Art Gallery of New South Wales' *Rare and Beautiful Things* exhibition, which included furniture, glass and textiles by Finnish designers, Eero Saarinen, Tapio Wirkkala and Maija Isola. Becoming Lady Hall Best (when her husband, John, was awarded a knighthood in 1956) cemented her role as an arbiter of taste to an establishment clientele and allowed her to introduce modern Scandinavian design into the extravagant and colourful interiors she was creating for it.⁴⁰⁷

In Best's autobiography, she described her use of Finnish products in her design for a 'Room for Mary Quant' [the British fashion designer, and one of the first in Britain to wear Marimekko clothes] at the 1967 Society of Interior Designers of Australia exhibition:

The furniture was arranged in two different areas ... The large white spherical Asko Finnish rotating [Globe] chair, its interior upholstered in orange wool [sat] beside a low white marble Saarinen circular coffee table ... A full length horizontal band of Marimekko two foot wide was strained on the long red back wall, drawing the two areas of design together.⁴⁰⁸

With its high-gloss colours, and flashy, space-age styling, the overall effect of this scheme was far from the restraint and naturalness associated with the popular understanding of 'Scandinavian' design, yet its use of advanced and unconventional Finnish products located 'Scandinavia' firmly within the lexicon of modernity that Best constructed through her projects.

⁴⁰⁷ Notes from the *Marion Hall Best Archive*, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney; and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. For an extensive biography of Marion Hall Best, see M Richards. *The Best style: Marion Hall Best and Australian interior design 1935–1975*, Art and Australia Books, Sydney, 1993.

⁴⁰⁸ 'Excerpts from the autobiography of Marion Hall Best', in Richards, op. cit., p. 124.

Marimekko had also been imported as part of a large range of Finnish-designed products by another Sydney business, The Finnish Importing Company, owned and operated by Russell Whitechurch. Whitechurch had lived in Sweden from 1954 to 1960, working as a teacher and making regular trips to Finland. He became aware of the extent of Finnish design in the country's exhibit at the 1958 Brussels World Fair and began to build business relationships with suppliers in Finland, bringing a range of samples of Finnish products with him on his return to Australia in 1960. Operating from 6 Marana Road, Northbridge, Sydney, Whitechurch became the agent for a range of products from Finnish manufacturers, including: Marimekko, Finnrya and Barker-Littoinen Ab textiles; Sanka plastics; Artek furniture; Iittala glass; Haimi furniture; Louis Poulsen & Co lighting; Finel enamelware; and Printex and Marimekko textiles. He made inroads for these products into the Australian market through supplying them to the New South Wales Public Works Department for some of its interior design projects. Whitechurch's business became synonymous with Finnish design, supplying Finnish ceramics, glassware, textiles, furniture, lighting and sauna equipment to specialty design stores across Australia, and to his own boutique store, Suomi, in Sydney's Double Bay and in Newcastle. These lines were later supplemented with Danish, Swedish and Italian products, making Whitechurch's showrooms a drawcard for those interested in European design developments.



Fig. 58
The Finnish Importing Company showroom in about 1969, with a display room furnished with predominantly Finnish products arranged by Australian interior designer, Babette Hayes

George Korody, a professor of architecture from Budapest University, arrived in Australia in 1939 to set up the Hungarian Pavilion of that year's world fair in Sydney. Remaining in Australia because of the outbreak of war in Europe, he established a business designing modern custom furniture for many European immigrants, among them, design-aware members of Sydney's Hungarian diaspora. In 1950, with Elsie Segart, he founded Artes Studios to sell the furniture he had designed and manufactured locally, as well as imports from a number of European manufacturers. In 1954, Artes Studios relocated from Castlereagh Street, to 539 George St, Sydney, where its stock included Scandinavian 'knock-down' furniture and lines from Dokka Møbler furniture, Norway.⁴⁰⁹

Anthony Urban arrived in Australia from Czechoslovakia in 1950 and settled in Canberra, where he operated Studio 1, a jewellery and gift shop in Manuka, specialising in Scandinavian products for an emergent consumer market in the capital: 'There was so much growth in Canberra and the young people needed things for their home.'⁴¹⁰ He moved to Melbourne in about 1962, establishing Forum Pty Ltd, in an elegant showroom designed by Czech designer, George Kral at 40 Lower Plaza, in the city's new Southern Cross Hotel in Exhibition Street. Urban was a close associate of Raoul Baudish—and a fellow Czech—stocking a range of Finnish products imported by Baudish's Incorporated Agencies. He was also the importer of Danish Dansk Designs ceramics, metal and wood ware designed by Jens Quistgaard (b.1919 Denmark).

Apart from David Foulkes Taylor, several other businesses in Perth were developed around Scandinavian merchandise, each being owned and operated by individuals fired with an enthusiasm to raise the consciousness of Scandinavian design in the city. While the following examples are from Perth, their objectives and methods of operation were typical of similar business in other Australian cities, run by equally committed individuals.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ D van Leer, *Artes Studios, the leading pioneer in fine modern interiors in Australia, goes national*, Artes Studios media release, November 1981.

⁴¹⁰ S Long, 'Scandinavian design: He chose quality', *Sun*, 3 October 1968, p. 8.

⁴¹¹ During the 1960s and 1970s each Australian city had retail stores specialising in Scandinavian-designed products for the home. Other than the businesses discussed, among the most prominent and successful were Design 250, Buckley's, La Granja, Stuarts, Matchbox, The Norway Shop, The Art Market, Danish Hi-Fi, Greville, IKEA, Gillam-Quigley and Thesaurus in Melbourne; The Design Centre, Colonial Galleries and David Jones in Adelaide; Ornamo in Hobart; Studio 12, Flair and Centroswiss in Canberra; the Johnstone Gallery, Craftsman's Market and Design Arts Centre in Brisbane; Jim Brant, Dansk Décor, Davro Interiors, Hearnsteads, Innovator and Joseph Pavlinovich in Perth; David Jones, Norway Designs, Unika Designs, IKEA, Karelia, Creative Interiors, Finlandia, Danesc Importing,

In Perth, as in other cities, these stores (along with a number of smaller gift shops, interior designers and furnishing stores) represented the largest segment of those businesses dealing with European-designed products, reflecting the increased market share for Scandinavian products during the 1960s and 1970s.

The Decor Design Centre in Perth provided a strong focus for Scandinavian-designed and influenced products. Located initially at 237 St Georges Terrace, Perth, its director was Alfred Knee, (b.1905 Austria, arrived Australia 1939, d. Perth 1966) formerly of Melbourne, where he had a furniture store in Camberwell. He moved to Perth to be closer to his daughter and established the Decor Design Centre in 1962. He was approached by the Melbourne furniture company, Danish DeLuxe, to represent its products in Western Australia, and also distributed Swedish Dux furniture, introducing it at the nearby Skinner Gallery in Perth on 6 July 1966.⁴¹² While the Decor Design Centre also represented the Danish lighting company Louis Poulsen, Knee also designed light fittings combining imported glass shades with locally made teak wood fittings, sold as the *Danlight* range. Other Scandinavian-style teak lamps were designed by Knee with lampshades made on-site by Edna Orr.

Alex Topelberg joined the firm in April 1966 as a salesman, eventually buying the firm on 1 May 1967 from the Alfred Knee Estate and moving the firm to 346-352 William Street, Perth in 1971, expanding into home/gift wares, including the Western Australian distributorship of Swedish Kosta Boda glass from 1970 to 1981. The *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition, held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1975, resulted from this connection, fulfilling Kosta Boda's desire for high-level exposure in Perth. Topelberg hosted the visit to Perth of Kosta Boda designer, Göran Wärff, during the exhibition opening period.⁴¹³

Seymour Wolfenger (b. Britain, arrived Australia c.1965) was the director of the first Georg Jensen store in Perth. The shop, opened in 1970, was among the first in the city's new City Arcade development and was noted for its elegant, modern Danish-style

Nordic Design, Scandinavian Design and Suomi in Sydney; and Georg Jensen, Kosta-Boda and Orrefors shops and department store boutiques in most cities.

⁴¹² Dux, a Swedish company that specialised in knock-down furniture for export, was imported to Australia by Stevenson Davies in Melbourne, which manufactured several of its lines under license.

⁴¹³ Notes from author's interview with Alex Topelberg 20 June 1997. Decor Design Centre also distributed Norwegian Westnofa chairs (particularly the *Siesta* chair designed by Ingemar Relling in 1965), Danish Holmegaard glassware and Swedish Rörstrand porcelain. Alfred Knee's career was discussed by Seona Smiles in 'Shape to fit the curves', *Sunday Times*, Perth, 2 October 1966.

interior fit-out of marble and palisander.⁴¹⁴ Wolfenger became a tireless promoter for the brand, introducing Georg Jensen silverware and jewellery and Royal Copenhagen Porcelain to Perth and stocking work by most of Jensen's major designers. Among them was Henning Koppel, the subject of a large touring exhibition staged at the Western Australian Art Gallery in 1973. This exhibition, facilitated by Wolfenger, as the Western Australian agent for the organiser, Georg Jensen, is discussed in detail in Part Three.

Also opened in 1970 in Perth's City Arcade was Olssons, owned and operated by Alan Johnston. A homewares store focused on Scandinavian products, it reinforced the European ambience of the arcade, along with the nearby Georg Jensen store and Miss Maud's Swedish Bakehouse café (operated by Swedish immigrant, Maud Edmiston), the first to introduce Swedish delicatessen and bakery styles and products to Perth. Stimulated by range of products he had seen in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, Johnston had opened his first Olssons store in the Western Australian regional city of Bunbury in 1968 (choosing the name, Olssons, as it sounded Scandinavian).⁴¹⁵

Sourcing stock from Raoul Baudish, Johnston staged the agent's *The Selection* exhibition of Finnish-designed ceramics, glass, cutlery and metalware in Bunbury in 1970. Johnston's move to Perth and the opening of his City Arcade store established him as the city's major retailer of Scandinavian-designed products, including Swedish Kosta Boda glass. Kosta later opened its own store, limiting Johnston's business opportunity with the company, encouraging him to build on his reputation as a glass dealer by specialising in Australian studio glass, then gaining a market presence in Australia.⁴¹⁶

Also in Perth was a franchise of Norway Designs, the retail arm of the Plus Workshops, which had been founded by Per Tannum in Fredrikstad, Norway, in 1957.⁴¹⁷ The Perth store was operated by John Clare (b. c.1911 Britain, d.1996 Australia) and traded from 1961 as John Clare Norway Designs (at 160 Mill Point Road, South Perth).

⁴¹⁴ The interior fit-out was commissioned by Wolfenger and designed by Drew Monsoon of the Perth firm, Environ, with furnishings and fittings made by the Perth firm Charles Catt and Son.

⁴¹⁵ Johnston opened his first shop at 16 Princep Street, Bunbury, on 9 April, 1968.

⁴¹⁶ Notes from author's interview with Johnston on 26 August 1986, and notes and Olsson's business archive papers supplied by Johnston.

⁴¹⁷ The Plus Workshops is discussed in Part 3:20: Impact on the policies of cultural agencies and craft and design organisations.

It presented its first exhibition of Norwegian-designed goods at Perth's Skinner Gallery in the same year.⁴¹⁸ Clare was stimulated to begin importing Norwegian products after visiting the PLUS workshops in about 1960 with his Norwegian wife, Julia Wilhelmsen, whom he met in 1948 (and from whom he separated in 1964). Julia was part of a family that owned the Norwegian Wilhelmsen shipping company, a connection that facilitated the regular supply of stock from Norway for the new business.⁴¹⁹ In 1966, Clare relocated the business to the new Terrace Arcade development in central Perth, providing the critical exposure of a range of 'alternative' goods to the local homewares and gift market. Terrace Arcade was the first new shopping arcade development to be built in Perth since the 1930s, reaching around behind the historic Palace Hotel from William Street to St Georges Terrace, and introduced modern boutique-style specialist shops, travel agencies and fashionable hairdressing salons to Perth's central business precinct. Norway Designs occupied the St Georges Terrace corner position of the arcade, giving the store high visibility in this, Perth's most prestigious street. It was unambiguously European in its presentation and stock, offering Perth shoppers a chance to 'travel' to Norway when shopping and to try products associated with newly introduced Scandinavian activities such as sauna, tabletop cooking and smorgasbord-style entertaining. The store became something of an unofficial 'embassy' for Norway, its presence and stock credited by many in Western Australia with their introduction to Norwegian life and culture.

The store sold a range of Norway Designs Export products and furniture and equipment from other Norwegian manufacturers.⁴²⁰ Other merchandise included traditional Norwegian feather-filled *dylene* bed quilts (this Norwegian name later became Anglicised in pronunciation to become the ubiquitous 'doona' in Australia), wood toys, pewter tableware, horn objects, traditional knitwear and embroidered felt and sheepskin boots. Many of these products, seen first in the Norway Designs shops, later influenced more mainstream production of leisure goods by Australian manufacturers and makers of crafted articles.⁴²¹ The store moved in the 1980s to Milligan Street, Perth, where its

⁴¹⁸ The Western Australian Art Gallery purchased several works from this exhibition.

⁴¹⁹ Information about John and Julia Clare from Peter Efford, Perth.

⁴²⁰ These included Hadeland Glass, Else Astrup-Våler and Pettersens Vevstue textiles, Cathrineholm enamelware, Lenestol Fabrik Falcon chairs (designed by Sigurd Resell), Porsgrund ceramics, Håg Balans ergonomic chairs and stools, Mørso and Jøtul stoves and Vestlandske Mobelfabrik *Siesta* chairs.

⁴²¹ In an advertisement, Kimpton's Feather Mills (Australasia) Pty Ltd, described its *Doona* as 'The modern Scandinavian eiderdown featuring adjustable warmth and filled with Sanitised natural down. You'll discover an entirely new way of sleeping – free, uninhibited...', *Vogue Living*, no. 6, 1975.

stock focused more on Norwegian slow-combustion stoves and outdoor-oriented goods and equipment, and operated until the early 1990s.

Baudish, Anderson and Rappe were among a number of retailers, representatives and agents in Australia for Scandinavian products who regularly visited each of the Scandinavian countries to source products from manufacturers, there being few trade fairs in Australia where this material could be evaluated. Established dealers, such as Axel Rappe, Russell Whitechurch and Marion Hall Best, also played an ambassadorial and wider entrepreneurial role in the development of programs to promote Scandinavian products in a wider arena in Australia. Many of the touring and promotional exhibitions of the work of Scandinavian designers originated through these connections.

The *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was an example: in June 1967, its organisers invited the agents, Marion Hall Best, Merlin Cunliffe (proprietor of Thesaurus in Melbourne) and Russell Whitechurch (proprietor of the Finnish Importing Company in Sydney) to Finland. The purpose was for the agents to preview and discuss the exhibition before its tour and to agree to act as willing promoters of its objectives on their return to Australia. This was not considered an onerous task as each person's firm would be retailing some of the products that would be included in the exhibition, and therefore derive some financial benefit from the association with the exhibition.

The Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* of 16 June 1967 reported on their visit:

... As guests of the Finnish Association of Arts and crafts they told about the demand for Finnish products in Australia ... The Finnish and Scandinavian designing is becoming actual in a new way in Australia during next year as Scandinavian Associations of Arts and Crafts are preparing for a wide exhibition tour ... In addition to the design products there will also be samples of our other so-called new exports as crisp bread and other products.

The article also touched on the matter of import duty, which, in Australia, meant that articles designed for medium, or even low-cost, attracted charges that put their final retail prices into the bracket of luxury goods:

These Australian businessmen now visiting Finland promised to take part in the Scandinavian campaign which will be actual in their cities in connexion [sic] with the exhibition. they considered that the chances of the campaign are promising. [To t]he

important question of prices they replied that the Australian prices for the Finnish design products were not exorbitant in comparison with many other European products. Many products as for instance furniture and clothes have to be included in luxury articles, because the import duty generally raises the prices by over 50%. Accordingly for instance furniture is favoured by a certain circle of customers: people who are really interested in design and people who wish to live up-to-date internationally.⁴²²

Marimekko fabrics, made from lightweight and low-taxed cotton, but with a very high design quality, was something of an exception to the problem of high prices. The textiles became associated with a hard-edged modernism when interior designers, such as Marion Hall Best, used Marimekko (and its Australian derivatives) fabrics in large banner-like drops as inexpensive, bold graphic elements in interior decoration. Its characteristic large graphic designs, silkscreen-printed and repeated over several metres of fabric, reflected the then new hard-edge abstraction and colour-field paintings that were being exhibited and incorporated in the same type of interior projects in Australia from the mid-1960s.

... The import duty remains considerably lower in textiles, if they do not pass a certain relative weight limit. Finnish decoration textiles, as light cotton fabrics, have indeed started to be used even in large interiors. It is astonishing that the initiative in this respect has come from the state and municipal establishments and not from architects, says Mr Whitechurch. There are fairly many official buildings that have been decorated with Finnish textiles. In addition to the textiles also glassware and kitchen utensils are articles favoured by a large public.⁴²³

The role of Marimekko fabrics in providing something of a 'flag of association' with contemporary Scandinavian design was played out wherever the product was sold in Australia. In each city, there were Marimekko devotees whose dress code (usually of Mod-style shift dresses and shirts in the fabric) would signal an interest in the egalitarian, anti-fashion construct of such Scandinavian products that was promoted by influential dealers and agents. However, such simplicity did not come cheaply, and a concurrent message of exclusiveness pervaded such displays. For many such devotees, the appeal of Marimekko has not diminished and the company's products remain for them a potent touchstone of their first contact with Scandinavian design.

⁴²² *Helsingen Sanomat*, 16 June 1967, Helsinki. The Marion Hall Best Archive, Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

⁴²³ *ibid.*

The Sydney graphic designer, Valli Moffitt, is an example. She designed the Australia Council's graphic design program and its Crafts Board's first exhibitions of Australian crafts from 1973 through to the 1980s, and was an enthusiastic, and often photographed, wearer of Marimekko. We can see a similar graphic sensibility to Marimekko's use of stripes and undulating fields of colour in her strong and colourful graphic work of the 1970s.⁴²⁴

The Australian interior decorator, Margaret Lord (1908–1976 Australia) was also a writer and lecturer on interior design, publishing the influential guide to interior design, *Interior decoration: A guide to furnishing the Australian home*, in 1944.⁴²⁵ She had studied art at the Swinburne Technical College and at the National Gallery School in Melbourne, before moving to London in 1936 to study furniture drawing at the Central School of Art. She secured work in the London interior design firm of Reens Arta before taking up a teaching position as Director of Studies at the Arnold School of Interior Decoration. She travelled extensively in Europe, visiting the 1937 Paris World Exposition and being particularly impressed with the Finnish Pavilion that had been designed by Alvar Aalto.

Lord returned to Australia in 1940, where she commenced writing and broadcasting, regularly taking part in the 1941 ABC radio program, *Design in Everyday Things*, as well as undertaking interior design work for a number of private and government clients, including shipping and aircraft companies.⁴²⁶ Her book had introduced modernism to the conservative world of professional interior decoration and reveals that she had absorbed some of the spirit of functionalism as propagated by earlier Swedish writers such as Key and Paulsson in her concluding statements that contemporary furniture should be 'Comfortable and convenient to use; Space saving; Labour saving; Beautiful to look at; and cheap enough for everybody.'⁴²⁷

Lord was aware of Swedish design at the time of its initial popularity in Britain in the mid-1930s but did not visit Sweden, Denmark and Norway until 1952. In her 1969

⁴²⁴ Notes from a conversation between the author and Moffitt in 2005, when she donated several of her 1970s Marimekko outfits to the National Gallery of Australia.

⁴²⁵ M Lord, *Interior decoration: A guide to furnishing the Australian home*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1944 (rev. edns 1945, 1946).

⁴²⁶ Margaret Lord's career is described in her autobiography, *A decorator's world: Living with art and international design*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1969.

⁴²⁷ Lord, *Interior decoration*, op. cit., 3rd edn, 1946, p. 107.

autobiography, she devotes sixteen pages to her impressions from that trip, and later visits in the 1960s, of the design industries and interior design of these countries, focusing on furniture. This was the most comprehensive account of Scandinavian design to have been published in Australia and shows her understanding of its development and its rationale, and its place in the larger field of international design.

17. Diplomacy and design: facilitating access to Scandinavian design

Each Scandinavian country had established formal diplomatic associations with Australia by the early twentieth century and used these posts in different ways to push for improved trade and the introduction of Scandinavian designed goods to the Australian marketplace.⁴²⁸ Through exhibitions and planned promotions, they served the Scandinavian agenda for influence in a new market, while at the same time offering a way for Australians to encounter and embrace a modernity that would develop a distinct Australian accent.

Several examples of the way that Sweden used its offices to promote such ideals serve to illustrate the close link between diplomacy and trade that were characteristic of all of the Scandinavian missions in Australia during the first two thirds of the twentieth century. Swedish trade with Australia dates back to the 1830s, when a deal was recorded for the sale of fifty barrels of Swedish wood tar in exchange for Australian wool. Carried in Swedish ships, exports by the 1890s were well established, in a trade based on timber. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, the Swedish Transatlantic Shipping Company (*Rederiaktiebolaget Transatlantic*) had provided a regular service between the two countries, contributing to a rise in the value of Swedish imports from A£99,967 in 1903 to A£360,633 in 1910.⁴²⁹

To more effectively control and develop this trade, Sweden's first career diplomat in Australia, Count Birger Mörner (1867–1930 Sweden), appointed Consul-General in 1906, proposed the establishment of a Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Australasia (formally known as The Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Australia, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands), to be based in Sydney.⁴³⁰ Sweden's then Consul-in-Chief,

⁴²⁸ Finland established its Consulate in Sydney in 1918. Its officers returned to Finland in 1941 and returned when formal diplomatic relations were re-established in 1949. In 1966 the Consulate moved to Canberra and was granted Embassy status in 1968, building its first building in 1978. A new Embassy building, designed by Vesa Huttunen of Arkkitehtuuritoimisto Hirvonen & Huttunen, was completed in 2002 in association with the Australian architects MGT (Mitchell Giurgola Thorp). This building is discussed in EK Bell & S Frith, 'Finland's frontier: The new Embassy in Australia', *Form Function Finland*, 87, no. 3 2002, pp. 10–15.

⁴²⁹ Statistics from HE Beckman and FH Johnston (eds), *Fifty years 1911–1961: Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands*, Special edition of The Trade Review, the Journal of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce Sydney Australia, FH Johnston Publishing on behalf of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Sydney, 1961.

⁴³⁰ Mörner's initiatives in relation to the formation of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce were undermined by his criticism of Australian society and an uncooperative attitude to Swedish immigration. These negative views were published in Sweden on his return visit there in 1909 and, on reports of their publication in Australia in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* on 9 February 1910, he was publicly castigated by the Premier of New South Wales who claimed that every Swedish immigrant to Australia

ST von Goes, became the first president of the Chamber on its foundation in 1911, and remained in this position until the end of his diplomatic term in 1917. Under Captain AE Lundgren, the Marine Superintendent of the Transatlantic Shipping Company, and its President from 1921 to 1943; and Gustav Lindergren, its permanent secretary from 1920 to 1947, the Chamber established itself as a centre for trade relations between Sweden and Australia. From 1921, it maintained a Sample Room to display Swedish products, providing access to importers who, by the mid-1920s, were making them readily available in Australian department stores. By 1960, Swedish exports to Australia totalled A£15.3 million, with pulp, paper and board accounting for some 40% of the total.⁴³¹

An example of the high status afforded design by the Swedish Government was the presentation of the *Canberra Goblet* (*Canberrapokalen*, also known as the Canberra Cup) by the Swedish Consul-General in Australia, Einar Lindquist, and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in May 1927 to the Australian Government on the occasion of the opening of the new Parliament House in Canberra.⁴³²

On the 9th of May, a goblet was presented to the City of Canberra, as a gift from Sweden, the land of short summers and hard winters – presented like a flower of white crystal, germinated in the heat of the foundry and the soot of the furnace and tended by gentle hands. On its foot may be read the name of the place where this flower was grown—*Orrefors*.⁴³³

Lindquist delivered the *Goblet* personally, in a precarious road journey from Sydney to Canberra, which included his vehicles being stuck in floodwaters. This fragile and dramatic covered glass vase was designed by Edward Hald and engraved by Gustav Abels and W Eisert at the Swedish Orrefors factory. Edward Hald (1883–1980) had studied with Henri Matisse before being hired by Orrefors in 1917. He became its managing director from 1933–1944 and is recognised as one of the leaders of

had found work. This incident led to Mörner's recall to Sweden by its Foreign Office on 25 August 1910. This matter is discussed in B Sharpe (ed.), *One way passage: Swedish immigrants to Australia in the James Sanderson Archive*, Word Wright, Sydney, 1998.

⁴³¹ CA, 'Cross section of Swedish industry touring Australian ports', *Sverige-Nytt: Swedish Digest*, 18 April 1961, p. 7.

⁴³² J Sweet, 'A harbinger of modernism', in K Wickman (ed.), *Orrefors: A century of Swedish glassmaking*, Byggförlaget Kultur, Stockholm, 1998, p. 187. The Canberra Goblet is on permanent display at Parliament House, Canberra.

⁴³³ Lennart Nyblom, quoted in AM Herlitz-Gezelius, *Orrefors: A Swedish glassplant*, Atlantis, Stockholm, 1984, p. 52.

modernism in Swedish design. While its form is that of the traditional German and Netherlandish covered beaker known as a *humpen*, Hald's design for this cup features engraved allegorical figures, in a combination of Swedish neoclassical and fashionable art deco styles, including that of a woman, holding a sceptre and torch, representing the City of Canberra. Its precursors were shown to great acclaim in the Swedish section of the 1925 Paris *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs*, creating a demand for large presentation pieces, the most notable of which was the 1922 *Paris Goblet*, presented to the City of Paris by the city of Stockholm during the exhibition. A photograph of this work was seen locally in 1925, in the Australian journal, *The Home*, illustrating aspects of the Paris *Exposition*.⁴³⁴



Fig. 59
The *Canberra Goblet* (photo: Art Collection, Joint House Department, Parliament House, Canberra)

In December 1927, capitalising on this official gift, the first exhibition of Orrefors glass in Australia was held at the Grosvenor Galleries in Sydney. The result of these promotional strategies developed the Australian market into one of Orrefors' most

⁴³⁴ 'Where nations meet – in a rivalry of art', *The Home*, 1 October 1925, p. 41. The *Paris Goblet* can be seen in a photograph of the Swedish Pavilion interior.

profitable export markets in 1928.⁴³⁵ Lindquist's (also the patron of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce) own home in Sydney had been featured in the magazine *The Home* in 1923, the writer Lionel Lindsay lauding its classic and restrained Swedish furnishings an example of the type of domestic style to which Australians could aspire.⁴³⁶

Swedish design reasserted itself in a particularly tangible fashion with the design and construction of one of Canberra's first purpose-designed diplomatic headquarters. The Royal Swedish Embassy Legation building was designed in 1947 by the Swedish architect, EHG Lundquist, and developed and documented by the Sydney architecture firm of Peddle Thorp and Walker. Its simple style and restrained and luxurious detailing, in the manner of the Swedish modernist architect, Gunnar Asplund, won it the 1952 Royal Australian Institute of Architects' Sulman Medal and Diploma (for buildings in the Public and Monumental class). Specially-commissioned etched and engraved glass panels set into its Queensland maple entrance doors were designed by the Orrefors artist, Sven Palmqvist (1906–1984 Sweden), and depicted stylised Swedish and Australian maritime, floral and faunal themes in one of the first such examples of commissioned bi-cultural decorative art to be seen in the capital. The other furnishings, fittings and equipment used in the building were all state-of-the-art Swedish manufactures, creating a permanent and practical exposition of the best of Swedish design.⁴³⁷ One of the jurors for the Sulman Award was Hal Missingham, then director of the National Art Gallery (Art Gallery of New South Wales) and, later, the prime mover for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

On the Scandinavian side, the negotiations for major exhibitions and events were placed in the hands of highly experienced individuals with long histories in international diplomacy and trade. The business relationships between these people were a key element in the introduction of Scandinavian design to Australia and its influence on our attitudes to design.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ Statistic from the Orrefors company board minutes, Orrefors Archive, Orrefors, Sweden.

⁴³⁶ L Lindsay, 'The home at Pymble of Mr Einar Lindquist, Swedish Consul General in Australia', *The Home*, 1923, pp. 39–43.

⁴³⁷ This use of Swedish products was partly due to necessity, as the building had to comply with strict rules in relation to the postwar shortage of building supplies in Australia. Its Swedish-manufactured double-glazed windows and copper roof were imported. 'The Royal Swedish Legation, Canberra', *Architecture*, October-December 1953, pp. 90–92.

⁴³⁸ These relationships in relation to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition are discussed in detail in Part 2.

18. Building a profile: commercial and cultural promotions and exhibitions of Scandinavian design in Australia

The 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was the major exhibition during the 1950-1980 period, but it was received in an environment of support for modern design that had been generated and nurtured, in part, by several previous exhibitions focusing on design from individual Scandinavian countries. Each was different in its organisation and promotional strategy, ranging from a department store display and a shipboard exhibit promoting Swedish products; to a civic exhibition based on private collections. Others were touring educational exhibitions for museums and galleries, and a design organisation where Scandinavian products took their place as part of a display of objects selected for their design qualities.

Sweden in Australia May–June 1954

This promotional exhibition, held at David Jones' Sydney store was instigated by the General Export Association of Sweden, and organised by the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*). It was designed by Anders Beckman, who had designed the Swedish displays at the 1939 New York World's Fair and the graphic program for the Swedish Society for Crafts and Design's *H55* exhibition of design in Helsingborg, Sweden in 1955. *Sweden in Australia* was the first major Australian promotion of Scandinavian products in the context of the department store, with its official cultural organisation giving a stamp of authenticity to a wide range of products that were to be included in the store's stock. The display included the loan of the Orrefors *Canberra Cup (Goblet)*, which had been presented by Sweden to the Australian Government, for the opening of Parliament House in Canberra in 1927. This promotional exhibition was the model used by David Jones and other stores through the following thirty years, most notably in the later store-wide promotional exhibitions, *Scandinavian Saga* and *This is Denmark: Great Danes Festival*, which included products by Danish manufacturers.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁹ These included Holmegaard (glass), Bing & Grøndahl (ceramic), Stelton (metalware), Hans Hansen (jewellery), Rosti (plastics), Michelsen (ceramics), Lego (building blocks), Peter F Heering (liquor), Lundtoffe (metalware), Copco (cookware), Frigast (cutlery), Design U (plastics), Royal Copenhagen (ceramics), Dyrland (furniture) and Ege-Rya (rugs). Merchandise listed in David Jones' advertisements for the *This is Denmark: Great Danes Festival*, David Jones, Sydney, November 11–25 1973, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 November 1973; *Sun-Herald* 11 November, 1973; *Sun*, 12 November 1973; and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1973.

Treasures of the Home 1954

Held at the Melbourne Town Hall, this was an exhibition of home furnishings from private collections. It featured a display of modern Swedish glass from the collection of Australian architect, Robin Boyd.

The Danish Pavilion, Sydney Trade Fair 1961



Fig. 60
The Scandinavia House exhibit in the Danish Pavilion, Sydney Trade Fair, Sydney, 1961

The Sydney Trade Fair of August 1961 included a separate Danish pavilion, funded by the Danish Government. Its exhibits included a display of contemporary Danish craft and design that was organised through the Sydney import company, Scandinavia Style Ltd. Axel Rappe, who had just taken over management of this company from its founder, Oscar Lenau, was the selector and designer of the exhibition and used the event to launch the restructure of this company as Scandinavia House. The display included a range of products sourced in Denmark by Rappe and sold through Scandinavia House

under the categories of ‘furniture, glassware, stoneware and pottery, jewellery and softgoods, teakware and homecrafts, and light fittings’. Notable among the furniture exhibits were examples of Ole Wanscher’s 1960 teak and leather *Egyptian Stool*, Nanna Ditzel’s 1957 woven cane *Hanging Chair*, and a free-form metal chair of about 1960 designed by Verner Panton. Replicas of historical Viking artefacts, Danish industrial products, and tourism products and services were included in other displays in the Pavilion.⁴⁴⁰

The Swedish Floating Fair 1961



Fig. 61
The *Swedish Floating Fair*, showing Saab and Volvo cars parked on the deck of the *Kirribilli*.

During 1961, the Swedish Transatlantic Shipping Company’s 10,500-ton ship, *Kirribilli*, was used by the General Export Association of Sweden (in cooperation with the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Sydney) to house a *Floating Fair* of Swedish products.⁴⁴¹ The *Kirribilli* called at all Australian ports in 1961 on the 50th anniversary of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce. It left Gothenburg on 28 March 1961 and returned in August after calling at Fremantle, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Port

⁴⁴⁰ Details of exhibits compiled from photographs of exhibition in Axel Rappe papers.

⁴⁴¹ This followed similar ventures by the company (which had been operating between Gothenburg, Sweden and Australia since 1910) to South Africa on its *Elgaren* in 1959 and to Asia by the Swedish East Asia Company’s *Bali* in 1957.

Kembla, Newcastle, Brisbane and Townsville. Products by 340 exhibitors, from heavy to small industry, were on board, displayed on 300 individual stands. The exhibition organiser was Claus Priwin.⁴⁴² In its June 1961 edition, the Western Australian journal, *The Architect*, reported:

Cabin accommodation had been converted into one large continuous display area where exhibits, in many cases, were ingeniously fixed to stands to avoid damage in transit. Three hundred exhibitors displayed a wide range of exhibits from speed boats, cars, and hydraulic drills to plastic carpets, pianos, elegant furniture and finest Swedish glassware. Some of the outstanding new innovations were a telephone combining earphone, speaker and dial within a single unit, a ticket queuing machine to aid large self-service stores and extendable book shelving for offices with several combinations.⁴⁴³

Glass manufacturers Kosta and Orrefors displayed their current product ranges and some of the exhibits were subsequently displayed at the Sydney Trade Fair in August 1961. The *Floating Fair*, with its innovative approach to display and promotion and its range of quality objects, many of which had seldom been seen in Australia before, was a magnet for designers and architects as well as for the retailers at whom it was primarily targeted.⁴⁴⁴ The maritime context of the exhibition reinforced the idea of exoticism and ‘otherness’, placing practical, everyday goods in the context of the rarefied import.

Design for Living 1962

This travelling exhibition was held at the National Gallery of Victoria before touring to all state art galleries during 1962 and 1963. A selected survey of consumer goods brought together to promote good functional design, the exhibition comprised eighty objects, including twenty-five objects from Scandinavian manufacturers, selected by the Council of Adult Education and the Education Department of Victoria in conjunction with the Industrial Design Council of Australia. Fifteen Danish objects (in melamine

⁴⁴² CA, ‘Cross section of Swedish industry touring Australian ports’, op. cit.

⁴⁴³ ‘The Swedish Floating Fair’, *The Architect*, June 1961, pp. 36–37. The telephone mentioned was the Ericsson *Ericofon* model, first designed by Ralph Lysell with Hugo Blomberg in 1941, and developed to its final form by Gösta Thames for production in 1956; the vehicles on board were the Saab 95 and the Volvo *P120* sedans.

⁴⁴⁴ The Western Australian retailer, David Foulkes Taylor, visited the *Swedish Floating Fair* while it was in Fremantle and was impressed with the exhibits of glass and ceramics, following up with orders to several Swedish manufacturers. DFT Archive, AGWA.

and teak), four Swedish works (in glass), five Finnish objects (in stainless steel, glass and stoneware) and one Norwegian object formed part of the display of products from the United States of America, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Austria, West Germany, Britain and Australia. The catalogue introduction was by Eric Westbrook, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, with an essay by Colin Barrie, Director of the Industrial Design Council of Australia.

Design '65 1965

The Museum of Modern Art and Design operated in Flinders Street, Melbourne, from 1958 to 1966, under the directorship of John Reed (1901–1981 Australia).⁴⁴⁵ Its program regularly included exhibitions and related events and lectures on the subject of industrial design. *Design '65*, a survey of current design, included examples of the work of the Finnish glass designer, Kaj Franck, produced by Nuutajärvi; the German glass designer, Heinrich Löffelhardt, produced by Zweiseil; and German Greiflinge turned wood toys, all supplied by Raoul Baudish of Incorporated Agencies in Sydney. Such works were shown in the wider context of contemporary art, graphic design and photography that the Museum provided to its audience.

These strategies—exhibitions, publishing, propaganda, advocacy and trade— took the craft and design-led cultural production of four small countries, little-known outside Europe in 1900, to an appreciative and responsive international audience by the 1960s. By the time that the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition began its Australian tour, each stratagem had demonstrated that it had within it the means (the people, the products and the philosophy) to inflect the qualities of the other, a cumulative effect that resulted in the emergence of the region as the source of a paradigm for rational modern design. By fostering an appreciation of the way that support for design can serve social needs, Nordic design agencies created a market for the products of the region far wider than could be achieved on trade alone.

The culture of comparison thus created gave design reformers outside of Scandinavia a genuine and tested model against which to measure their own achievements.

Technically resolved Scandinavian-designed products for the home arrived in places such as Britain, North America and Australia already validated through rigorous testing

⁴⁴⁵ The museum opened as the the Museum of Modern Art of Australia and was situated at 376 Flinders Street, Melbourne. Bogle, op. cit., p. 135.

and consumer acceptance in their home markets. For Australia's fledgling designers and manufacturers of products in the same categories, Scandinavian imports and the rhetoric surrounding their production values were persuasive models for comparison.

With weak copyright protection in Australia, Scandinavian designs were readily plagiarised, although this practice gave a number of local manufacturers the chance to bring new products on to the market. In turn, this led to improved manufacturing methods and experimentation with Australian materials and, in due course, the confidence to develop original designs that were more responsive and suited to local needs and budgets.

In propagating the style and production methodology of the Scandinavian design industry as a model for Australia's design industries and emergent craft sector, the role of a small number of committed individual importers and retailers was crucial. Their work and zeal influenced local acceptance of Scandinavian-designed and manufactured products to a level far beyond what might have been expected of small businesses operating in the competitive retail environment of Australia's large cities. Up to the early 1970s, no other country or group of countries was able to garner local support for (and understanding of) their design industry to the extent that the Scandinavians achieved through their Australian proselytisers, agents and retailers. The longer-term influences from that period and the implications for Australian design practices are discussed in Part Three.

Part Three

Nordic resonances in craft and design in Australia 1968–1980

From the perspective afforded by the passing of almost forty years since the inauguration of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, we can see how its impact was felt in a number of interrelated fields of Australian craft and design. As it was experienced in the context of art museums, the exhibition exposed audiences to the role those institutions could play in presenting and validating design and craft as part of the spectrum of visual arts. This was manifested through a number of subsequent exhibitions they staged during the period of 1968 to 1980, along with a marked increase in the acquisition of Scandinavian works for their collections. This integration of formerly marginalised craft and design practices and disciplines with other visual arts was also reflected in the policies of the Australia Council, which, through its Crafts Board, initiated and developed several exhibitions that included Scandinavian material.

The example of Scandinavian design and craft achievement seen in these exhibitions, and the understanding of the role of advocacy and promotion in making it visible formed a central part of the rationale for the national and State craft organisations that formed in the decade following the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. Scandinavian models of training and workshop practice were examined and adapted in the programs of newly established craft centres such as the Jam Factory Workshops. The ‘lessons’ that could be learned from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, so often mentioned in reports and reviews of it, were acknowledged, but in ways that allowed Australians to find appropriate ‘voices’ for their developing craft and design practices.⁴⁴⁶

Part Three examines some of the developments that grew from the exposure to Scandinavian design models during the 1960s and 1970s, though the work of museums and art galleries, craft organisations, commercial operations, and individual designers and craft practitioners.

⁴⁴⁶ See Appendix 1: Media references to the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, for detail on commentary.

19. Continuing the cultural narrative: later exhibitions

A measure of the success of the strategy to present the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in the context of art museums was their audiences' broadened expectations of a wider interpretation of expression and achievement in the visual arts. The exhibition demonstrated the viability of a co-operative relationship between museums, overseas and Australian craft and design organisations, government agencies and trade sectors in raising the awareness of the practice of design as cultural expression. As a result, a number of other exhibitions on aspects of Scandinavian design followed during the next decade. While these events did not reflect any particular strategy on the part of exhibition agencies and museums, examined together we can see how they began to present consistent perspectives on the subject that served Scandinavian trade objectives. They also served the agendas of Australian cultural organisations that had begun to integrate operational and promotional strategies inspired by Scandinavian design into their programs. The following accounts of some of the key exhibitions from 1968 to 2006 reveal a consistency of message from each Scandinavian country (and together as a Nordic cultural group) that was unmatched in Australia by any other country in the promotion of its design industries.

Design and Craft from Finland 1968–1969

This exhibition was organised by Raoul Baudish, importer of Finnish products through his Sydney company, Incorporated Agencies. Baudish, as has been shown, was a key figure behind the scenes in the planning of the concurrent *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and an energetic promoter of Finland and Finnish design. The exhibition was planned in cooperation with the Finnish companies he represented, the Finnish Foreign Trade Association and the Finnish Design Center in Helsinki, to capitalise on the interest in Finland and Finnish design that had been created by the prominent inclusion of the country's products in the concurrent *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. The exhibition was shown during or soon after *Design in Scandinavia* in department store galleries and smaller, specialty stores across Australia, such as David Jones, Brisbane; Buckley & Nunn, Melbourne; David Jones, Canberra; The Design Centre, Adelaide; Farmer's Blaxland Galleries in Sydney; and David Foulkes Taylor in Perth, giving it an air of exclusivity and rarity. The showing at David Foulkes Taylor was from 20 February to 9 March 1968, coinciding with the presentation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery.

The majority of the objects displayed were unique craft works by designers and artists associated with Finnish companies such as Arabia, Nuutajärvi, Iittala and Tampella, offering an insight into the studio production that underpinned the development of their related designs for mass-production by these companies.⁴⁴⁷ In the introductory essay of the small exhibition catalogue, Baudish wrote on what he saw as the stimulus for Finnish designers, and in doing so, revealed something of his own passion for Finnish design that manifested itself in his tireless background negotiations for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition:

Living deep in the country or in towns scattered among the forests and lakes, Finns have developed a profound respect for, and a robust responsiveness to their surroundings. Ask them to name their greatest designer – they will answer ‘Nature’. Highly literate and sophisticated, they consider designing a most rewarding way of life. Their designs have an individuality and honesty that match the country and its people. This is understandable, for the great influence on the creative mind of Finland is the Finnish environment ... in recent years the free spirit of the creative artist has found a useful and rewarding place in industry, bringing to everyday objects a stimulating blend of utility and beauty. When I saw the Finnish Pavilion at the Triennale Design Exhibition in Milan in 1957, and again in 1960, I hoped that an exhibition of similar standard would some day come to Australia.⁴⁴⁸

Architecture in Finland

8 December 1972 to 27 February 1974

This travelling exhibition was prepared by the Museum of Finnish Architecture and brought to Australia by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. It was designed to tour state and regional galleries in Perth, Adelaide, Mildura, Canberra, Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart, Sydney and Brisbane over a period of two years. The exhibition commenced its Australian tour in Perth, where it was staged at the Western Australian Art Gallery from 8 December 1972 to 8 January 1973. The exhibition architect, Paavo

⁴⁴⁷ The artists whose works were included in the *Design and craft from Finland* exhibition were Rut Bryk (ceramics), Annikki Hovisaari (ceramics), Kaj Franck (glass), Toini Muona (ceramics), Birger Kaipiainen (ceramics), Liisa Hallamaa (ceramics), Francesca Lindh (ceramics), Heljätuulia Liukko-Sundstom (ceramics), Friedl Kjellberg (ceramics), Oiva Toikka (glass), Ulla Procopé (ceramics), Raija Tuomi (ceramics), Kirsti Ilvessalo (textiles), Dora Jung (textiles), Marjatta Metsovaara (textiles), Ritva Puotila (textiles), Vuokko Nurmesniemi (textiles/fashion) and Uhra-Beata Simberg-Ehrström (textiles).

⁴⁴⁸ R Baudish, *Design and craft from Finland*, n.p., Sydney, 1972. Baudish developed this exhibition during the lead-up to *Design in Scandinavia*, the exhibition that had become the landmark event that he desired.

Mänttäri, travelled to Perth for the exhibition opening, which was performed by the Finnish Ambassador to Australia, Tuure Mentula. The exhibition's specially designed wood structure included photographs, plans and models of contemporary Finnish buildings, and furniture lamps, glass and textiles designed by Alvar Aalto. The exhibition also included some examples of Artek's production versions of Aalto's furniture from the 1930s to the 1950s for use as public seating in the exhibition space, enabling visitors to examine these pieces closely and have their first experience of sitting in these famous chairs. The exhibition themes were *National Romanticism, Art Nouveau, Art Nouveau Constructivism, Monumentalism, Saarinen's Town Plans, Classicism of the 1920s, Early Functionalism* and *Functionalism*, offering possibly the first public exposure in Australia of these aspects of Finland's architectural history. The catalogue's introductory essay was written by the Australian architect, Harry Seidler, who took this as an opportunity to laud Finnish town planning and architecture while including, as comparison, a number of critical remarks about Australians' supposedly poor attitudes to design (examples of which are discussed on page 137).⁴⁴⁹

***Henning Koppel* 1973**

Perth (AGWA), Sydney (CP), Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart



Fig. 62
The *Henning Koppel* exhibition at Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth, 1973

This exhibition, organised by the Danish Museum of Decorative Art (*Det danske Kunstindustrimuseum*), Copenhagen and Georg Jensen Sølvsmiede (Silversmith), Denmark, focused on the work of the Danish designer, Henning Koppel (1918–1981),

⁴⁴⁹ Seidler, op. cit., pp. 3–5.

on the 25th anniversary of his work with the company. As one of Georg Jensen's most prolific designers for silver, jewellery and metal hollowware, Koppel's work had been represented by several of his most important designs in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, creating an awareness of, and a market for his work in Australia.⁴⁵⁰ On the strength of this interest, Jensen's Australian dealers sought to bring the exhibition to Australia and presented it in association with the importer, Harland L Hogan, who brought into Australia under the auspices of the Western Australian Art Gallery, the first venue. Its Director, Frank Norton, was at the time the Chairman of the Australian Gallery Directors' Conference and had taken up the proposal for the exhibition, on the suggestion of Georg Jensen's director, Anders Hostrup-Pedersen, in 1972.

The exhibition was comprehensive, its two-hundred works including silver jewellery and hollow ware items designed for Georg Jensen; lamps and watches designed for Louis Poulsen; porcelain designed for Bing & Grøndahl; melamine objects designed for Torben Ørskov and several working drawings. The works were shown on some of the same open display platforms that had been used for the previous *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and accompanied by contemporary works from the Gallery's collection, including Australian artist, John Coburn's tapestry, *In Praise of the Sun*, which used similar organic themes to Koppel's three-dimensional works. Publicity in Perth was coordinated by the Gallery in collaboration with Seymour Wolfenger, the director of the newly opened Georg Jensen store in Perth's new City Arcade shopping complex.

This exhibition had been developed by the Danish Museum of Decorative Art, and first shown there in November 1971, as *Henning Koppel: Arbejder Gennem Fomogtyve Aar* (*Henning Koppel: Twenty Five Years of Design*), before being shown in Düsseldorf, several other German galleries and at Goldsmith's Hall in London. After the Perth showing, the exhibition travelled to Georges, Melbourne; Centrepoint, Sydney; Newcastle City Art Gallery; the Mildura Arts Centre; Geelong Art Gallery; Sale Regional Arts Centre and the Benalla Art Gallery. Its Sydney presentation was timed to coincide with the opening of the Sydney Opera House, taking advantage of the heightened interest in Danish design created by this event.⁴⁵¹ Koppel was a contemporary of the Opera House's architect, Jørn Utzon, and visitors to the new

⁴⁵⁰ Koppel's designs for Georg Jensen in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition included his most celebrated designs of the mid-1950s, the sterling silver *Pitcher No 1052* (1956) and *Fish dish with cover No 1054* (1954). The *Pitcher No 1052* had been prominently placed on open display in the exhibition and was shown in a number of the press images.

⁴⁵¹ The Sydney Opera House was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 20 October 1973.

building and the concurrent exhibition could see how similar organic design influences in the two designers' works could be played out on vastly different scales. The Western Australian Art Gallery's press release for the exhibition included a statement from Koppel:

When I see how a branch grows organically out of the trunk of a tree, I am inspired by this, and I suppose I seek to create the same organic unity between the body of a jug and its spout or lip. Silver demands rhythm. I like the shape to be rigorous and alive with movement.⁴⁵²

Adventure in Swedish Glass

Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, 1975.



Fig. 63
The *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition installation, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 1975

This exhibition was a direct consequence of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition seven years earlier. In 1972, the Australian Gallery Directors' Council had approached the Swedish Society for Industrial Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*) for a proposal for an exhibition that could further the aims that underpinned the *Design in Scandinavia* event,

⁴⁵² H Koppel, quoted in *Silver designer's work to be shown here*, Western Australian Art Gallery news release, 30 May 1973, p. 3.

and recapture some of the new audiences that the exhibition attracted.⁴⁵³ Some AGDC members feared that another Scandinavian design exhibition would expose them to further criticism from the art world of pandering to commercial and trade agendas.⁴⁵⁴ However, following discussions with Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg from the Swedish Society for Industrial Design, the AGDC, through its chairman, Western Australian Art Gallery Director, Frank Norton, the AGDC agreed that an exhibition focused on studio glass would find an appreciative audience in Australia.

The need to stimulate and develop Australia's struggling studio glass sector had been identified as a priority by the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, through its 1975 Crafts Enquiry, and the Council made a grant to assist with the exhibition in Australia. This supplemented support from the Swedish Institute for the costs of assembling and curating the exhibition in Sweden, under its Commissioner, Lennart Lindkvist, director of the Swedish Society for Industrial Design. The AGDC's aims for this project were outlined by Norton in his catalogue introduction:

... Again it is with much pleasure that the Australia Gallery Directors' Conference present to the people of Australia the exhibition 'Adventure in Swedish Glass', a collection of glassware which has been especially assembled over the last two years for this tour. It is hoped that this Swedish exhibition will serve as an artistic and cultural interchange between our two peoples. We feel sure that the fine skills and exquisite craftsmanship of these designers, their sensitive imagination and highly developed knowledge of their materials will give great pleasure to the Australian public, as well as help our own designers to progress in the field.⁴⁵⁵

The exhibition was designed by Johan Huldt and Jan Dranger as a complete package—glass works, modular, stackable black-painted exhibition stands with integrated backlighting, labels and accompanying catalogue—for ease of installation in a number of different venues. This practical, yet theatrical display approach created great interest from museum and gallery visitors and drew many comparisons to the well-deigned trade displays of Kosta-Boda's and Orrefors' products that had created something of an industry standard since the early 1960s. The exhibition premiered in Perth at the

⁴⁵³ F Norton, 'Preface', in L Lindkvist (ed.), *Adventure in Swedish glass*, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Stockholm, 1975, p. 1.

⁴⁵⁴ Tony Tuckson addressed his concerns on this matter to AGDC Chairman, Frank Norton in a letter of 25 July 1972, AGWA archive.

⁴⁵⁵ Norton, op. cit., p. 1.

Western Australian Art Gallery, running from 7 February to 23 March 1975 as its contribution to the 1975 Festival of Perth, and attracting 19,087 visitors,⁴⁵⁶ reigniting concerns about the Gallery's appearance, lack of air-conditioning and suitability for exhibitions of modern craft and design. In some ways these were disappointing criticisms for the Gallery, which had taken the lead in Australia in the presentation of such exhibitions, at a time when construction work was about to begin on its new building. Again, museum visitors experienced not only a conflation of the retail and the museum experience, but also the experience of seeing a newer type of glass, different from the smooth and fluid modernist aesthetic usually associated with Scandinavian glass.

Australian critics responded positively to this new interpretation of Scandinavian design, finding a '...complete freedom of ideas and technical experimentation'.⁴⁵⁷ The works included in the exhibition were mostly unique pieces, or those designed for small series production. Most were derived from the designers' own experiments within the studio environment provided for them in the Kosta Boda and Orrefors glass factories, while employed there as resident artists.⁴⁵⁸

Several of these artists had previously visited Australia, accompanying commercial exhibitions and promotions of their production work in Kosta Boda's and Orrefors' stores. Göran Wärrff (b.1933 Sweden) had visited in 1972 and returned (re-married by then to an Australian) to live in Sydney for several years from May 1974, working with glassblower, Peter Minson (b.1941 Australia), and also at the Leonora Glass company, while at the same time continuing as a freelance designer for Kosta Boda. Wärrff represented the company at the exhibition opening in Perth and acted as a spokesperson for the project during its tour in Australia. He also played a role in the development of several emerging Australian glass artists by recommending their admission for training at Orrefors. Minson was the first to have this opportunity, followed by Neil Roberts (1954–2002 Australia) from Canberra and James Dodson (b.1949 Australia) from Tasmania. Roberts' experience at the Jam Factory in 1978 and 1979, and later at

⁴⁵⁶ Seven years later, this was a similar attendance to the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition's 18,261 visitors. The Western Australian Art Gallery had made no progress towards improving its display facilities in its existing facility, but had announced plans for a new Gallery to be completed in 1979.

⁴⁵⁷ G Langer, 'Creativity bubbles in in Swedish glass blowing', *Courier Mail*, 29 May 1976.

⁴⁵⁸ The designers whose work was included in the *Adventure in Swedish glass* exhibition were Olle Alberius, Monica Backström, Lisa Bauer, Eva Englund, Carl Fagerlund, Lars Hellsten, Paul Hoff, Ulrica Hydman-Vallien, Jan Johansson, Henning Koppel, Sigurd Persson, Signe Persson-Melin, Rolf Sinnemark, Bertil Vallien, Ann Wärrff and Göran Wärrff.

Orrefors for six months, gave him substantial grounding in not only the techniques of glassblowing and forming, but also a respect for the collaborative nature of the craft and the necessary teamwork involved in its production.⁴⁵⁹ Roberts' work as an artist involved the use of glass in unconventional ways as elements in his sculpture and he is remembered for his role as a mentor and facilitator for others in his field.

In her catalogue essay, 'Kosta Boda and Orrefors today', Helena Lutteman, Curator of the Department of Applied Art at Stockholm's National Museum of Fine Arts, describes the new Swedish approach to glass exemplified by the exhibition, referring to the work of each artist. This included the production of Bertil Vallien, who would subsequently become the most prominent of Kosta Boda's artist/designers:

Bertil Vallien was among those who made a great success when the 'new' Swedish glass made its appearance. He is one of those who have denied the meaning of handcraft skills. Perhaps mostly for himself and out of fear of becoming mannered. He has experimented with various techniques, sand moulding and sand blasting. First came bowls and other vessels, then sculptures. Today he also builds entire landscapes. Opaque masses contract with crystal-like structures, rough icy forms with stiffened glass streams—the whole thing in an almost surrealistic manner.⁴⁶⁰

It was precisely this approach that had stimulated the establishment of Australia's first studio glass workshop at the Jam Factory Workshops (established in 1974 in Adelaide), and developed by the American glassblower, Sam Herman (b. 1936 United States of America), previously working at London's Royal College of Art (RCA). The South Australian Craft Authority brought out Herman for this advisory position on the strength of his work in developing the RCA's glass program. The Crafts Board of the Australia Council had taken a great deal of interest in this venture and in 1975 had funded and developed another travelling exhibition, *American Glass Now*, in order to stimulate the nascent glass field then being centred on the Jam Factory.⁴⁶¹ The Jam Factory's aims were to provide a means of studio-based of training in glass that could result in artists being able to compete, at least in Australia, with the well-developed products of (among

⁴⁵⁹ Notes from conversations between Neil Roberts and the author, Canberra, 2002.

⁴⁶⁰ H Lutteman, 'Kosta Boda and Orrefors today', in Lindkvist, *ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

⁴⁶¹ *American Glass Now* was curated by Denis Colsey at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and toured in Australia under the auspices of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council. The works in the exhibition, which had been purchased by the Board, became part of its Crafts Board Collection, which was donated to the National Gallery of Australia in 1981. Some of the works in the *American Glass Now* exhibition were also given by the Crafts Board to the Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery to augment its developing specialist collection of contemporary studio glass.

others) Scandinavian factories that were then dominating the retail market for decorative glass. The *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition was therefore a timely and relevant apposition, but ultimately a model that could not successfully be emulated, as the venerable Swedish glass companies could provide financial backing far beyond that which could be given by the South Australian Craft Authority to its Jam Factory venture. Ultimately, the exhibition's success was in the commercial realm, greatly expanding sales for both Kosta Boda and Orrefors.⁴⁶² However, it exposed a wide gallery-going audience to a new style of glass and eventual acceptance of its Australian interpretations.

Designed in Finland 1982

This travelling exhibition, developed by the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, was presented in Australia under the auspices of the Finnish Embassy in Canberra. Its coordinator was Seppo Mallat, a designer for the Finnish metalware company Finel and for the British metalware designer, Robin Welch.⁴⁶³ Mallat had been recruited to Adelaide, South Australia, in 1968 by SABCO (SA Brush Company) to develop new designs for its products, before forming a partnership in a design business with Dick Richards (Australia b.1938), a South Australian jeweller and the Art Gallery of South Australia's Curator of Decorative Arts.

The exhibition focused on contemporary Finnish glass, ceramics and furniture, and was a reduced version of a larger exhibition, *Finland Designs*, toured internationally by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design. It was focused on production work of designers such as Alvar Aalto, Timo Sarpaneva, Tapio Wirkkala, Ulla Procopé, Marjatta Metsovaara, Vuokko Nurmesniemi, Gunnel Nyman and Kaj Franck, all of whose work had been shown previously in Australia. The exhibition, which was presented with its own display system and graphics, was shown at the Art Gallery of Western Australia from 9 July to 1 August 1982, immediately prior to the Gallery's first major craft exhibition, *International Directions in Glass Art*, held from 11 August to 19 September 1982. The glass component of *Designed in Finland* included major designs from the 1950s to the 1980s and served as

⁴⁶² The successful impact, in terms of increased sales in Australia of Orrefors and Kosta Boda glass, of the *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition and other promotions by Orrefors and Kosta Boda is discussed in J Sweet, 'A harbinger of modernism: Orrefors in Australia', in Wickman, op. cit., pp. 186–195.

⁴⁶³ Seppo Mallat's work had been included in the 1968 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

something of a primer for the international exhibition which followed, and which did not include any glass from the Scandinavian countries.⁴⁶⁴

Following these projects from the 1980s through to the present, a number of exhibitions focused on aspects of Scandinavian design were held in museums, universities and art centres. A detailed analysis of these later events is beyond the chronological scope of this thesis, but they are listed and briefly described in Appendix 2 to give a sense of the continuity and momentum created by the earlier exhibitions discussed in this chapter.

⁴⁶⁴ The author installed the *Designed in Finland* exhibition while Curator of Craft and Design at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. He was also the curator of the *International directions in glass art* exhibition, whose participating artists had been selected in consultation with the exhibition selector, Michael Esson. This exhibition was mounted in response to an initiative of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, which funded it with support from the glass company, Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI). Following a precedent set by the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, a number of works from this exhibition were acquired after its Australian tour for the collections of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Powerhouse Museum. The author selected the works acquired by the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

20. Impact on the policies of cultural agencies and craft and design organisations

By 1968, the newly formed network of the Craft Association of Australia and the State craft associations had begun to identify the need for improved tertiary craft training to equip artists with the skills needed to produce well-designed and crafted objects that could compete with imports on the Australian market.⁴⁶⁵

The Scandinavian system of design and craft education, which stressed long apprenticeships and training in the real-life situation of factories and small craft businesses and enterprises, equipped many Scandinavian practitioners with skills that were valued and sought in Australia. The image of Scandinavia's design and production quality, functional products and sensitive use of materials was a natural progression from the Arts and Crafts ideals that had dominated craft and technical education in Australia since the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of the British or British-trained design educators working in Australian art and design schools held positive views on the superiority of Scandinavian design as a result of their exposure to it in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s and created a receptive environment for the work of Scandinavians entering the design/craft education and training industry in Australia. A number of the Scandinavians in the training industry also worked for commercial companies, maintaining a high industry profile and professional contacts in Australia and in Europe. These contacts facilitated links for Australian students who would later visit Scandinavian firms, craft and design centres and craft colleagues.

Since the 1920s, studio craft practice had been promoted by a number of proselytisers, artists and writers in Britain, Japan and the United States of America. The ennobling of traditional craft practices, the introduction of professional craft training and the experimental use of craft media and techniques to develop new types and styles of functional and decorative objects fostered a studio crafts revival that, by the early 1960s, was beginning to gain international visibility.⁴⁶⁶ This broadening of craft practice

⁴⁶⁵ The minutes of the Craft Association of Australia steering committee of April 1965 state: 'The recommended aims for the Association are as follows:...4. To encourage the establishment of craft training facilities.' These aims remained as a consistent core objective of the Association as it evolved into the Crafts Council of Australia. Extensively developed, these aims informed the Crafts Enquiry (the Committee of Enquiry into the Crafts), set up by the Federal Government at the instigation of the Crafts Council of Australia in March 1972, and brought under the auspices of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council in 1975. Australian Council for the Arts, *The crafts in Australia: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the crafts in Australia*, vol. 1, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975.

⁴⁶⁶ The World Crafts Council, established in 1964 by the American, Aileen Vanderbilt Webb, aimed to raise international awareness of the values and economic potential of craft practice in all countries.

was vigorously promoted by the American Crafts Council, which was established in 1947, and was a propagating force in the programs of the New York-based World Crafts Council. Both organisations were models for the development of the national craft organisation in Australia, the Crafts Council of Australia, which was formally established in 1971, representing Australia as the national entity on the World Crafts Council. Such organisations promoted the innovative work of individual artists as an important part of a strategy to make known the entire spectrum of craft practice and to give it visibility in the context of contemporary art.

The emergence of a strong crafts movement in the late 1960s began to shift the focus of craft training from a purely institutional base to the more experimental environment of the individual or collective studio. The success of the work of Scandinavian designers was recognised as a model for comparison and discussion by arts organisations and cultural agencies, particularly the Australia Council's Crafts Board, the Crafts Council of Australia and the Design Council of Australia.⁴⁶⁷ Their programs of advocacy and support led to the establishment of craft centres where Scandinavian and other design-led models of production could be trialled and evaluated in an Australian environment.⁴⁶⁸

Case study 1: The Jam Factory Workshops

This South Australian Government-funded and developed craft centre in St Peters, Adelaide was established by the South Australian Craft Authority in 1973 following advisor Dick Richards' report from his 1971 research into overseas models such as the Den Permanente design centre in Copenhagen and the Kilkenny Design Workshops in Ireland. Richards was an education officer with the Art Gallery of South Australia, its Curator of Decorative Arts from 1968 and later its Curator of Asian Art. He was also a designer and had worked as a Project Officer for the Council of Industrial Design in

The WCC held biennial General Assemblies and conferences in each of its zones: North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, and was supported through UNESCO as a Category A organisation. The Crafts Council of Australia was the national entity member of the World Crafts Council and took an active role in its programs and Assemblies, providing an important link between Australian crafts practitioners and their counterparts in other countries.

⁴⁶⁷ Scandinavian design was promoted by Dick Richards (see Case Study 1, above) when he was a member of the Crafts Board. The Design Council published regular reports on developments in Scandinavian design in its journal, *Design Australia*. Craft Australia's involvement in the World Crafts Council gave its representatives regular contact with their counterparts in Scandinavia, a number of whom were senior design figures and took active and leading roles in the organisation. The author, as an individual member of WCC from 1968 and Deputy Vice-President of the WCC's Asian Zone from 1980 to 1984, met key Scandinavian designers and museum curators during these meetings.

⁴⁶⁸ An assessment of craft training needs in Australia was developed by David Williams in *Crafts education and training*, Crafts Board Australia Council, Sydney, 1978.

South Australia. He was an inaugural member of the Australia Council's first Crafts Board in 1973 and had set up a private design partnership in Adelaide with the émigré Finnish designer, Seppo Mallat, to develop a range of locally produced products.

Richards had also met the visiting Swedish glass designer, Gunnar Cyrén, who was visiting Adelaide on promotional tours during the *Design in Scandinavia* and *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibitions, and later visited Stockholm with him, studying the retailing methods of department stores selling knock-down furniture.⁴⁶⁹ As an adviser on craft and design policy to then South Australian Premier, Don Dunstan, Richards was instrumental in developing support for craft training through specialised craft centres in South Australia. Richards' recommendations and lobbying played a large part in the South Australian Government's decision to establish and support the development of the Jam Factory Workshops and Craft Centre.⁴⁷⁰

Richards was among a number of craft and design professionals who had examined the structure and operations of the recently established and highly publicised Kilkenny Design Workshops. Kilkenny's existence was a result of an initiative of the Irish Export Board to improve the competitiveness of Ireland's design and craft industries by adopting Scandinavian models of design training, an objective shared by Australian design authorities. The Export Board's Design Section had invited a group of five Scandinavian design professionals to Ireland in 1961 to assess the potential for development of crafts there. This group's report included a number of recommendations aimed to rejuvenate Irish crafts through the improvement of design and marketing, stimulating the Board to examine what was then the most successful European model for a modern craft and design centre: the Plus Craft Workshops in Norway.⁴⁷¹

Plus had been established in the historic quarter of Fredrikstad by Per Tannum, who had made his name as Norway's leading manufacturer of furniture. Under his direction, Plus operated as a group of individual workshops employing designers and craftsmen to create new designs for glass, ceramics, textiles, wallpaper, furniture and silver which could be produced in its workshops for the Norwegian market and for the organisation's

⁴⁶⁹ Notes from the author's conversations with Richards over a number of years, and during a meeting in Adelaide on 26 August 1996 to discuss Richards' role in the introduction of Scandinavian design models in Australia.

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ P Caffrey, 'The Scandinavian ideal: A model for design in Ireland', *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 8, 1998, pp. 32–43.

franchised Norway Designs stores in a number of countries (including Australia). The Kilkenny Design Workshops followed this model closely and with much success, itself becoming a model for similar organisations such as the putative Jam Factory.⁴⁷²

In the December 1969 issue of *Craft News*, the first newsletter published by the Craft Association of Australia New South Wales Branch, Sydney silversmith Helge Larsen wrote a report on his recent visit to Kilkenny, noting its reliance on Scandinavian designers and the Plus model:

The well known Finnish designer Bertel Gardberg has been responsible for the overall design policy ... many of the designers and craftsmen in the workshops came from Scandinavia, giving many of the products a Scandinavian character ... It is hoped that the high standard set by foreign designers and craftsmen will eventually encourage the development of local design.⁴⁷³

Visits to the Kilkenny Design Workshops were a highlight of the program of the 1970 World Crafts Council General Assembly in Dublin, giving the Australian delegates to the conference a chance to see the centre in action, and to meet some of its designers and crafts practitioners. The author was among the Australian delegates, who included ceramicists, Marea Gazzard and Les Blakebrough, both instrumental in the development of craft organisations in Australia (along with Dick Richards). Richards' 1971 visit to the Kilkenny Design Workshops was undertaken with the informed brief of these other colleagues and was crucial in developing his understanding of what could be achieved for craft development with Government support.⁴⁷⁴

Located in a renovated former jam factory in the inner suburban area of St Peters, the Jam Factory Workshops consisted of training workshops for ceramics, glass, textiles, leather, wood and jewellery/metalwork along with individual craft rental studios, a shop and an exhibition gallery to display its residents', trainees' and collaborators' work. Each studio was headed by a practising artist in the field, their teaching supplemented by shorter-term residencies by visiting artists. Like Plus and Kilkenny, the Jam Factory employed artists to develop, from studio-based research, a range of viable products that

⁴⁷² *ibid.*

⁴⁷³ H Larsen, 'The Kilkenny Design Workshops', *Craft News*, December 1969.

⁴⁷⁴ Helge Larsen, in his role as Senior Instructor in the Department of Industrial Arts at the University of New South Wales, and Charles Furey FIDIA, a Sydney designer, both contributed to discussion about the Kilkenny Design Workshops as a model for an Australian enterprise in 'An Australian Kilkenny?', *Design Australia*, October 1971, pp. 36–39.

could be produced in quantity by its workshop trainees and marketed under its own brand at its St Peters site and elsewhere. The South Australian Craft Authority's aim was to demonstrate that this method of craft training and production could establish South Australia as a centre of excellence in contemporary craft, continually refreshing the state's strong base of craft practice by attracting overseas artists to work on short-term contracts in its ceramics, leather, textiles, glass, and jewellery workshops.

Its jewellery studio workshop was run by the Danish jeweller Vagn Aage Hemmingsen (b. 1922 Denmark, Australia 1973–1978, d. 1990 Denmark), who had trained as an apprentice with Georg Jensen Sølvsmide in Copenhagen from 1936 to 1941, later working as a silversmith for the Danish firms of A Michelsen and F Hingleberg (the Royal Court Jewellers). With his wife, jeweller, Ingemarie Hemmingsen, he had worked and exhibited in Sydney and Perth before coming to Adelaide in about 1975. He was responsible for designing and equipping the jewellery workshop to accommodate eight trainees, and imparted his rigorous Danish training methods through the production of a range of small silver products.⁴⁷⁵

The Jam Factory's Glass Workshop was established in 1974, under the direction of consultant, Samuel Herman (b. 1936 United States of America), an American glassblower who had been working in Britain. Herman designed and set up the facility and, with Czech glassblower, Stanislav Melis (b. 1947 Czechoslovakia), trained the Workshop's first apprentices. As Australia's first studio glass facility, the Jam Factory Glass Workshop attracted a number visiting Scandinavian artists. Swedish glass designers, Eva Almeberg and Willy Andersson visited and worked there in 1979, while Göran Wärff, who had been living in Australia since 1974, made several visits. Also visiting was the Swedish glass artist, Bertil Vallien, who had been travelling in Australia promoting his work for Kosta Boda during the *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition's 1975 Australian tour.

Their presence as visitors, and occasional demonstrators and workshop team participants, initiated dialogues with the Swedish glass industry, helping to demystify its powerful commercial presence and encouraging younger artists to consider working and training in Scandinavia. Adelaide glass artist, Peter Tysoe (b. 1935 Britain), who took

⁴⁷⁵ G Cochrane, *The crafts movement in Australia: A history*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1992, p. 284.

over the Workshop in 1986, had travelled to Scandinavia on a Churchill Fellowship in 1970, where he had worked with Bertil Vallien at Kosta Boda's Åfors Glassworks, studying his sand-casting glass techniques.

Sweden's factory system of artists directing skilled glassblowers to realise their designs was not fully adopted by the Jam Factory, where the individual artist/maker model became a more attractive proposition for those wanting to enter the field, particularly as Australia's few commercial glass factories offered little opportunity for experimental work.⁴⁷⁶ However, the innovative design, technical quality, and sheer quantity, of Swedish, Finnish and Danish commercial glass on the market in Australia during the late 1960s and the 1970s provided a continual spur to the Australian studio glass practices that were finding their own directions at the Jam Factory.

The Kilkenny Workshops also played a part in the further development of the smaller Sturt Workshops that had been established in 1941 in Mittagong, New South Wales, by Winifred West, after her retirement as the principal of the girls' school, Frensham, which she had founded in 1913. Sturt offered training in crafts under the tutelage of workshop leaders, initially in the fields of ceramics and textiles, and later in jewellery and wood. The potter, Les Blakebrough (b.1930 Britain), who had arrived in Australia in 1948 and studied at the East Sydney Technical School from 1955 to 1957, worked at Sturt under ceramics workshop head, Ivan McMeekin, from 1957, succeeding him to become its manager in 1959 before moving to Hobart, Tasmania in 1972. In 1970, Blakebrough went as a delegate to the World Crafts Council Conference in Dublin, Ireland, where he met several Norwegian potters from the Plus Workshops who were working at the Kilkenny Workshops. At their invitation, Blakebrough subsequently visited the Plus Workshops in Norway in 1971, where he met the Norwegian silversmith, Ragnar Hansen (b.1945 Norway), who had been apprenticed to the silversmith, Erling Christofersen, under the rigorous Norwegian four-year guild training system. Hansen then undertook training at Kilkenny before returning to Plus in 1969.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ For an account of the creative role of resident artists within Sweden's major glass factory, see K Wickman (ed.), *Orrefors: A century of Swedish glassmaking*, Byggförlaget Kultur, Stockholm, 1998.

⁴⁷⁷ J Nelson, 'Ragnar Hansen: A biographical sketch', *Jewellers and metalsmiths Group of Australia Newsletter*, no. 3, April 1981; and notes from the author's interview with Ragnar Hansen, Canberra, 15 April 1997.

Keen to establish a silver smithing workshop at Sturt, Blakebrough invited Hansen to come to Australia to set this up and to devise a training program for jewellery and metalwork. Hansen arrived in 1972 and stayed at Sturt for a year before moving to Launceston, Tasmania, to establish the Gold and Silversmithing Workshop at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education School of Art (now University of Tasmania). Both Blakebrough and Hansen brought experiences of Kilkenny and Plus to their formation of Sturt's training programs in ceramics and jewellery/metalwork, providing a legacy of craft production that has continued and been adapted under the direction of those who followed them.

Blakebrough also drew from his Scandinavian experiences in his later teaching program for ceramics at the University of Tasmania School of Art. He maintained dialogues with Norwegian potters, particularly Arne Åse, with whom he worked on the development of porcelain design and glazing techniques.⁴⁷⁸ He also undertook an artist-in-residency, supported by a Churchill Fellowship, at the Royal Copenhagen porcelain factory in Denmark and at Hackman-Arabia in Finland, developing production techniques that he incorporated into his studio practice on his return to Hobart.⁴⁷⁹ Acknowledging his experience at Royal Copenhagen, particularly in relation to the importance of model-making, the facility he developed at the University of Tasmania allowed him to undertake relatively large-scale production of fine porcelain ware, using the 'Southern Ice' white porcelain clay that he had developed.⁴⁸⁰

Though her interest in slip-casting techniques, Penny Smith (b.1949 Britain), Blakebrough's successor at the University of Tasmania's School of Art, continued to infuse the ceramic department's programs with Scandinavian ideals. A ceramicist interested in the design and production of functional ware, Smith was influenced by Scandinavian design and production methods. In 1994, she went to work as an Artist-in-Residence at the Arabia ceramic factory in Helsinki, Finland, studying its longstanding system of employing ceramic artists to develop, from their own work and studio

⁴⁷⁸ In 1994, Blakebrough was Associate Professor and Head of Research at the Centre for the Arts, UTAS, Hobart. Blakebrough found that his work with decorated porcelain, which he had developed since the early 1980s, had affinities with that of Norwegian ceramicist, Arne Åse, whose research and writing on the effects of nitrates and acids on unglazed porcelain had expanded interest in the subject. Blakebrough and Åse first met in Oslo in 1990.

⁴⁷⁹ Blakebrough's Churchill Fellowship research is discussed in A Darby, 'A way ahead', *Ceramics Art and Perception*, no. 18, 1994, pp. 3–7.

⁴⁸⁰ Blakebrough's clay and glaze research is discussed in J Holmes, 'Les Blakebrough's Southern Ice', *Ceramics Art and Perception*, no. 24, 1996, n.p.

experiments, designs for the factory's lines of functional tableware. During this time, she developed her work on translucent porcelain luminaries, bringing back to Tasmania work with a distinctly Nordic sensibility to light.⁴⁸¹

Case study 2:

Crafts Council of Australia

The genesis of this organisation was as the Craft Association of Australia, New South Wales Branch. It was formed in 1964 in response to a growing concern at the lack of a professional support for the burgeoning revival of studio crafts practices in Australia that had begun to take shape in the early 1960s. A number of special-interest and media-based groups and associations (particularly the well-organised Potters' Society of Australia) had existed for some time, supporting their members through newsletters, exhibitions and ad-hoc representation at national and overseas conferences. However, seeking a broader representation of craft, a small group of practitioners began to articulate the need for the formation of a national coordinating and advocacy organisation that would represent and promote all craft practices.⁴⁸²

Among those leading discussions on this idea was Axel Rappe, proprietor of Scandinavia House, which, as the first store in Sydney to focus entirely on Scandinavian-designed goods, was a magnet for those interested in design and an exemplar for those who sought to improve the quality and marketability of Australian-designed and made products.⁴⁸³ Rappe was associated with a group of early proponents of a craft association, which included the Sydney potters, Marea Gazzard, Ivan McMeekin, Les Blakebrough and Col Levy; interior designer, Mary White; architect, Neville Gruzman; and the Danish silversmith, Helge Larsen, who had arrived in Australia in 1961. Larsen and his wife (who is also his studio partner), Darani Lewers, brought direct knowledge and experience of the modern Scandinavian craft movement to Sydney and became associated with an Australian interpretation of its styles and methodologies. Larsen found a strong supporter in Rappe—perhaps as a

⁴⁸¹ G King, 'Lightworks: Recent work by Penny Smith', *Ceramics Art and Perception*, no. 25, 1996, pp. 62–66.

⁴⁸² The development of Australian national and State craft associations, craft funding bodies, crafts advocacy and specialist-media craft networks from 1964 is discussed in depth in G Cochrane, 'Organising for change', in *The crafts movement in Australia: a history*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1992, pp. 94–119; and 'Excellence and opportunity', *ibid.*, pp. 348–279.

⁴⁸³ See discussion on the development of Rappe's business on pp. 184–188.

fellow Scandinavian—who suggested to him, at a Sydney arts function in 1964, that a craft association be formed in order to bring together, promote and exhibit the emerging talent in Australian craft.⁴⁸⁴

This suggestion resulted in an inaugural meeting, at 36 Gurner Street, Paddington on 8 June 1964, of a steering committee to shape an organisation that would support local craft and industrial design through research and advocacy, exhibitions, publishing, lectures and information. Rappe, who was to be elected as the Association's Secretary at the second meeting on 22 June 1964, issued the notice of the first meeting with an agenda that explained some of its desired aims:

To encourage and assist local crafts and industrial design ... [t]hrough sales from a permanent exhibition and through its services generally... [t]hrough the offer of a genuine selective craft gallery.

To increase our knowledge of overseas craftsmen and their work ... [t]his question can be answered through various channels but it is strongly felt that it is important to have a retail design shop either independent or associated with the organisation, to be closely situated to it and to work with the same selective aims in reference to international design and crafts.⁴⁸⁵

Rappe's retail showroom of Scandinavian design, Scandinavia House, had closed one week before this meeting, due to the expiry and non-renewal of his lease. It seems highly probable that his enthusiasm for the formation of a craft association, with a gallery and exhibition centre as a key component of its operation, was driven, in part, by an ambition to continue a similar business under a different structure.⁴⁸⁶

In its structure and aims as a non-profit organisation, the newly formed Association was more aligned to the existing American and British craft organisation models—the American Crafts Council and the British Crafts Council—than to the Scandinavian system of official design organisations. However its inaugural Formation Committee, with Rappe's example before it, acknowledged the presence of highly developed Scandinavian products in the Australian marketplace as both a stimulus and a challenge

⁴⁸⁴ Larsen recalled this meeting in a conversation with the author in March 2007.

⁴⁸⁵ A Rappe, 'A.C.C. Functions', *Preliminary Meeting: Proposed Australian Craftsmen's Council and Craft Gallery*, meeting notice and agenda, 8 June 1964.

⁴⁸⁶ ARP.

for Australian designers and makers to achieve a similar level of design and production quality.⁴⁸⁷ By April 1965, the Committee issued minutes of its meetings, recommending that the Association, among other objectives, an aim:

... To encourage the establishment of craft and design training facilities ... [t]o establish a crafts gallery ... [t]o exhibit and promote abroad the work of Australian craftsmen and designers and to introduce overseas crafts to Australia.⁴⁸⁸

The Craft Association of Australia held its early meetings in the newly built offices of another supportive Scandinavian, the Honorary Finnish Consul in Sydney, Thor Gram Thorvaldson (b.1906 Norway), whose British wife, Winifred (née Daniels, d.1992 Australia), was a weaver and early member of the Association. A Norwegian, Thorvaldson was the managing director of the Norwegian shipping line, Wilh. Wilhelmson Agency (established in Australia in 1895), which had just commissioned for its headquarters a fine new building, Liner House, in Bridge Street, Sydney, designed by architects, Bunning and Madden.⁴⁸⁹ Its offices were fitted out with Scandinavian furnishings and included a major commissioned metal sculpture in its entrance foyer, by the Sydney artist, Douglas Annand.⁴⁹⁰

Thorvaldson, as has been discussed in Part 1, was at the time beginning to play a key role in the organisation of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and, for a businessman and a diplomat, was unusually well-versed in matters of design and the importance it played in the construction of Scandinavian cultural identity. He had joined the Wilhelmsen firm in Oslo in 1926 and in 1930, following postings in London, Belgium and France, was sent to work in the company's Australian office in Sydney. He became its manager in 1954, and in 1955 became the managing director of Wilhelm Wilhelmsen Agencies.⁴⁹¹ The assured Scandinavian ambience of Rappe's and Thorvaldson's work environments provided a fitting professional backdrop for the formative discussions

⁴⁸⁷ The Formation Committee of the Craft Association of Australia was elected on 22 June 1964 and comprised the following members: Peter Alexandroff (textile designer); Les Blakebrough (potter); Mollie Douglas (potter); Marea Gazzard (potter); Neville Gruzman (architect); Bernhard Hammerman (businessman); Helge Larsen (jeweller); Col Levy (potter); Ivan McMeekin (potter); Joan McPherson (potter), Elisabeth Nagel (weaver) and Joy Warren (potter). ARP.

⁴⁸⁸ Minutes of the Craft Association of Australia Steering Committee meeting, issued April 1965.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Wilh. Wilhelmson: Liner House', 1960, *Architecture in Australia*, December 1960, pp. 68–74.

⁴⁹⁰ Douglas Annand was among the founding members of the Craft Association of Australia. His career is discussed in depth in A MacDonald, *Douglas Annand*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2002.

⁴⁹¹ Wensell, op. cit.

about the role of a craft association in setting the agenda for craft and design reform in Australia.

The Association, in its later incarnation as the Crafts Council of Australia, achieved these aims with considerable success through its programs from the 1970s. Its structural membership of State crafts councils gave the organisation's aims and programs a wide national spread, resulting in an effective network of information sharing and of regional progress in the crafts. Funded through the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, the Crafts Council of Australia also developed some of its programs to respond to the Board's initiatives for crafts industry support and reform in Australia.⁴⁹² The Crafts Council of Australia was the national entity member of the World Crafts Council, contributing to its policy development and discussion on a wide variety of craft and design matters, including the role of crafts in the reflection and articulation of national identity. The WCC's President from 1980 to 1983 was the leading Swedish designer, curator, exhibition organiser and writer, Åke Huldt, whose authoritative leadership began to bring a greater focus on design issues within the organisation.⁴⁹³

From 1968 to 1988, my own art practice in ceramics and textiles (a part-time activity in addition to my paid employment as a designer) brought me into contact with the then burgeoning studio craft movement in Australia and extended my awareness of international developments in the field.⁴⁹⁴ As an inaugural member of the Crafts Association (later Crafts Council) of Western Australia from 1967, I became involved in craft advocacy, drawing upon my experience of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition as a model for the promotion of contemporary craft. My work as an advocate for craft

⁴⁹² A number of these initiatives flowed on from recommendations made in Australian Council for the Arts, op. cit.

⁴⁹³ Åke Huldt was the director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen from 1950 to 1957 and organised some of its most prestigious design exhibitions. He later became the head of the Konstfack design school.

⁴⁹⁴ While in Sweden in 1970, in addition to visiting design centres and craft organisations, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet at her home the venerable Swedish textile designer and weaver, Barbro Nilsson (1899–1983), the director, since 1941, of the famed weaving workshop, AB Märta Måås-Fjetterström in Båstad. I was able to talk to her about her own work, her role in the workshop and the development of modernist textile design in Sweden, and to gain a sense of the importance of design continuity that she brought to this enterprise. I was introduced to Barbro Nilsson by the Swedish weaver and textile conservator, Eva-Louise Svensson, in Båstad, Sweden, August 1970. I returned to Sweden and Denmark in 1974 and 1980, meeting colleagues in design museums, design centres and craft and design organisations. In Denmark in 1974, I had discussions with John Vedel-Rieper, Director of the Danish Society of Craft and Design (*Landsforeningen Dansk Kunsthaandværk*). The association with Vedel-Rieper continued through the 1980s through our later roles as office bearers of the World Crafts Council.⁴⁹⁴ In Sweden in 1980, I had discussions with Lennart Lindqvist, Director of the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*), and Regina Ivarsson, Director of the Malmö Form/Design Center in Malmö. Ivarsson was among a number of Scandinavian delegates that I met during attendance at the 1978 World Crafts Council General Assembly in Kyoto, Japan.

practice in Australia has been strongly influenced by my experience with the Crafts Council network.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ In 1970, as an independent delegate, I attended the World Crafts Council General Assembly in Dublin, Ireland, where I spoke about my own practice, and met and began associations with several Scandinavian designers and craft practitioners. I later attended WCC General Assemblies in Toronto, Canada, in 1974; Kyoto, Japan, in 1978; Vienna, Austria, in 1980; and Sydney in 1988. As the President of the Crafts Council of Australia and Deputy-Vice President for the WCC's Asian Zone, I was the Australian national delegate for its Regional Assemblies in Manila, The Philippines, in 1980; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1981; Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1982 and Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 1983.

21. Scandinavian-influenced craft and design production in Australia since 1968

For Australian crafts practitioners and designers, the exposure of the work of Scandinavian designers in the *Design in Scandinavia* and other exhibitions during the 1960s and 1970s was an opportunity to examine closely a variety of styles, materials, design innovations and production methods for a wide range of functional and decorative objects for the home. For a newly-trained, post-WWII generation of designers and makers, emerging in the mid-1960s from the first formal degree courses in crafts and design offered by technical colleges, institutes of technology and colleges of advanced education, these exhibitions verified desirable and enviable models of practice. These showed how artists and designers were given a free hand to research and trial ideas within industrial structures that supported them by promoting and developing their work for a wide market while expressing themselves in a variety of materials for different manufacturers. Studio craft artists' unique works were proudly promoted as valid forms of cultural expression by national craft and design organisations, directing them into the wider sphere of the visual arts.

The practice of prominent Scandinavian companies, such as Orrefors, Kosta Boda and Georg Jensen, in sending their major designers on promotional tours to Australia, where they were hosted by department stores and specialist design retailers, gave craft-based design a status it had not previously enjoyed in Australia. Visiting glass designers, appearing in the companies' stores in a similar manner to authors on book-signing tours, often engraved their signatures on customers' purchases of production pieces designed by them—a highly effective sales strategy that, in many cases, encouraged newly-enthused collectors to follow particular designers' work. Highly experienced in this type of promotion, Orrefors, Kosta Boda and Georg Jensen positioned their visiting artists and designers as cultural ambassadors, often securing the promotional services and hospitality of the Scandinavian embassies and consulates in each city visited to ensure that high level contacts were made with art galleries and museums as well as with prominent clients.

The influence of visiting designers and crafts practitioners on Australian craft and design has been significant, despite the short amount of time most have stayed. Visits by participating designers were also made in association with touring exhibitions, such as *Design in Scandinavia* and *Adventure in Swedish Glass*, lending 'human interest' to

press reporting and publicity. A number of artists visiting in association with these events met local designers, craft practitioners, and teachers and students in university and college art and design departments or craft centres such as the Jam Factory Workshops in Adelaide. Return invitations from these visitors allowed Australians to make links with them or their companies on visits to Scandinavia, often resulting in long-term professional relationships beneficial to the field in Australia. The field in which this process has had the greatest impact is studio glass; possibly because of the teamwork nature (and its resultant conviviality) of glassmaking which has allowed actual participation in the process by Australian visitors to factories in Sweden (at Kosta Boda in particular) and Finland.⁴⁹⁶

Those who made long visits or immigrated to Australia from Scandinavian countries or from places where they would have had an exposure to Scandinavian design while training, have had a significant impact in areas of Australian design and craft education, marketing and production, disproportionate to their relatively small numbers. Several immigrant Danish silversmiths had made their mark in the nineteenth century. Danish emigrants, mostly from the former Danish provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, lost to Prussia in the second Schleswig War of 1864, had been attracted by the Victorian gold rushes from 1851. Others included the previously discussed Jochim Wendt in Adelaide, Ludwig Qwist (1818 Denmark–1877 Australia), and Julius Hogarth and Conrad Erichsen, trading as Hogarth, Erichsen & Co in Sydney, who made Australia's earliest silver trophy cup, *John Thompson's Testimonial* in 1859 (now in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney). These silversmiths traded on the difference of their Danish heritage and design skills in a largely British-influenced field of practice, although their work was soon identifiable as part of the wave of fashion for Australian subject matter in the production of ornamental silverware.⁴⁹⁷

More closely associated with the emergence of modern design in Australian craft was the Danish artist and metalworker, Elisabeth Soderberg (b. date unknown–d. 1939 Denmark) who lived in Sydney from 1890 until 1922, when she returned to Denmark.⁴⁹⁸ While in Sydney, Soderberg studied metalwork at the Sydney Technical College and at

⁴⁹⁶ Australian studio glass artists who visited glass factories in Sweden are discussed in Sweet, op. cit., p. 195.

⁴⁹⁷ The work of these silversmiths is discussed in J Hawkins, *Nineteenth century Australian silver*, Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, UK, 1990, vols 1 and 2. *John Thompson's Testimonial* is illustrated p. 131.

⁴⁹⁸ The current accepted spelling of Soderberg is an Anglicisation of the Danish form, Søderberg.

the Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales, where, as a member, she exhibited from 1909. In her metalwork, particularly her copper bowls and plates, she used repoussé techniques to depict native Australian flora and fauna motifs in a sinuous, naturalistic style. Her work was similar to that of the late 1890's *Jugend* work of Danish silversmith, Harald Slott-Møller and Swedish painter and designer, Alf Wallander, which she may have known about or have seen published in journals such as *The Studio*.⁴⁹⁹ Soderberg bequeathed fifty pieces of her metalwork to the Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales, some of which were subsequently donated to the National Art Gallery (now the Art Gallery of New South Wales) and the Technological Museum in Sydney (now the Powerhouse Museum of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences).⁵⁰⁰

Scandinavian designers and craft practitioners arriving in the 1960s and early 1970s did so at a time of high receptiveness to Scandinavian ideals and design in Australia (as elsewhere in the western world, but particularly in the USA, Britain and Japan) and found themselves to be spokespersons for those ideals, demonstrating them through their craft and design skills. In a wave of post-WWII European influence in design in Australia, the Scandinavians maintained a rarefied status, enhanced by favourable comparisons and associations with the work of their compatriots that was increasingly being seen in the imported furniture and homewares specialist stores in Australia's capitals.

The Swedish glass designer, Göran Wärff (b.1933 Sweden), visited Australia in 1972 on a promotional tour with an exhibition of his work for the Swedish glass manufacturer, Kosta-Boda, where he had been employed as a designer since 1964. He travelled with his first wife, the artist Ann Wärff (b.1937 Germany, Sweden from 1964; now Ann Wolff) with whom he worked in design partnership for Kosta Boda. In 1974 he formally resigned from Kosta and emigrated to Australia, living (with his second wife, Mary Jenkins, an Australian) and working in Newport, Sydney from March 1974 to 1978, only returning to Sweden from 1976, for two months each year to work at Kosta.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ Alf Wallander (1862–1914) was designer for glass, textiles, metalwork and furniture for a number of Swedish companies, including ceramics for the Rörstrand Porcelain Factory where he was its artistic director in 1895.

⁵⁰⁰ 'The Elizabeth Soderberg bequest of metalwork 1939', *Historical sketch of The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW, Part II 1931–1956*, Pamphlet no. 706.09944.HIS, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, pp. 4–5.

⁵⁰¹ Notes from the author's interview with Göran Wärff at Orrefors, Sweden, 17 November 1999. Wärff's work is discussed in C Wingard, 'Voyages of discovery', *Craft Arts International*, no. 47, 1999–2000, pp. 37–41.

While in Australia, Wärrff met the American glass artist, Sam Herman, in Adelaide and advised him on the development Jam Factory's glass workshop. During this time, he also worked as a designer for the Leonora Glass company in Newcastle; designed some lamps for Phillips; produced some commissioned glass work for the Sydney Opera House; and met the Australian filmmaker, Peter Weir, for whom he worked as production designer for the film, *The Last Wave*. Wärrff was appointed by Kosta as curator for the *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition while it toured Australia in 1975, taking responsibility for overseeing the installation in each venue and giving lectures on his own work and that of other glass artists working for Kosta. He mentored the Australian glass artist, Peter Minson (b. 1941 Australia), who subsequently went to Kosta to work with him in the late 1970s. In September 1993, Wärrff exhibited new work at the Despard Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania, with fellow Swedish glass artist, Eva Englund, who had maintained a home there since 1990. He returned to Australia in 1999 (the first time since leaving in 1978) with an exhibition of his work at the Volvo Gallery, Sydney, in April and at Orrefors, Perth in May.⁵⁰²

The Danish silversmith, Helge Larsen (b.1929 Denmark) has been discussed in relation to his role in the formation of the Craft Association of Australia. Larsen had trained in Denmark at the Guldsmedehøjskolen in Copenhagen, gaining a national Diploma in 1953, and as an apprentice with the jewellery firm of Viggo Wollny. From 1955 to 1957, under a trainee program of the American Scandinavian Foundation, he worked in the studio of Stig Gusterman in Denver, Colorado, where he also undertook studies in design and sculpture at the University of Colorado.⁵⁰³ This was the period of peak Scandinavian design exposure in America, and seeing its strong influence there on a nascent American craft revival stimulated Larsen's interest in the promotion of craft. Larsen's wife and studio partner, Darani Lewers (b.1936 Australia), had initially trained as a jeweller in Sydney with the Estonian jeweller, Niina Ots, before travelling to Denmark in 1958 where she met and worked with Larsen at his Sølvsform studio in Copenhagen. She is the daughter of the sculptor, Gerald Lewers and artist, Margo Lewers, who were strong advocates for modern Australian design from the late 1930s to the 1950s.

⁵⁰² *ibid.*

⁵⁰³ Helge Larsen's and Darani Lewers' careers are discussed in J O'Callaghan, *Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers: A retrospective*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1986.

En-route to Sydney on the *Oronsay* in January 1961, Larsen and Lewers landed briefly in Perth, where Larsen was interviewed about his work on local ABC radio. He also met the owner of Perth's prestigious Skinner Gallery, Rose Skinner, who offered the couple an exhibition at her gallery at the end of 1961. He was disappointed to learn that his formal training as a silversmith in Denmark and the United States was not recognised in Australia. However, he felt that being identified as a Dane gave him a definite advantage in selling his work and attracting commissions where he could exploit the cachet of Danish design, which had grown from its association with refined craft techniques and consistent quality. His Sydney customers were aware of the quality of Danish design through the marketing of Danish products by businesses such as Georg Jensen and Scandinavia House and found the same qualities, and even more exclusivity, in Larsen's and Lewers' unique works. By maintaining a commitment to making their works financially accessible, they developed a large and loyal clientele from their first workshop in George Street, Sydney, and later from their home studio in the northern suburb of Seaforth.

In 1962 Larsen started teaching the first industrial design course at the Department of Industrial Arts at the University of New South Wales, as Senior Instructor in its metal and furniture design program until 1974. His students included industrial arts teachers from across Australia, many of whom responded to his lectures on Scandinavian design and went on to incorporate Scandinavian design principles into their own teaching programs.⁵⁰⁴

Larsen and Lewers exhibited regularly in Australia, becoming closely associated with the growing crafts movement. Following a meeting with the architect, Robin Boyd, they were invited to exhibit their opal jewellery and silver hollowware in a display of contemporary Australian art at the Australian Pavilion at *Expo '67* in Montreal.⁵⁰⁵ Boyd had been impressed with the Scandinavian pavilions at previous international expositions and felt that Larsen and Lewers' clean-lined work suited the concept for his pavilion design and demonstrated a new type of Australian craft that was diversifying in

⁵⁰⁴ Notes from author's interview with Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers at their home in Seaforth, Sydney, 27 May 1995, and from subsequent informal conversations with them.

⁵⁰⁵ Larsen's silver tea set made for display at the Australian Pavilion at *Expo '67* is discussed in 'Australian design for Expo 67: Handcrafted with an eye to mass production', *Design Australia*, No 1, 1967, p. 31.

style and presentation under the influence of skilled immigrants.⁵⁰⁶ Later in 1967, Larsen and Lewers returned to live in Denmark for a year, travelling widely in Europe to absorb new themes in their work, and to develop others such as the characteristic kinetic elements of their jewellery. Larsen and Lewers developed jewellery and objects to express the Australian environment, often using articulated construction in their jewellery to allow it to move naturally on the wearer's body. Some works incorporated fragmented photographic imagery of vernacular buildings, and several made a link with the Sydney Opera House as it became a dominant feature of the Sydney cityscape. Later works incorporated actual fragments of industrial detritus with stones and precious metals.



Figs 64, 65

left: Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers *Coffee set* 1971, sterling silver and laminated wood
right: Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers *Traces neck ring* 2000, sterling silver, stone, iron, ceramic shard. All collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Lewers went on to play a key role in the development of the crafts movement in Australia, becoming the second Chair of the Australia Council's Crafts Board from 1976 to 1980, and a member of the Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney. Both of these roles gave her the opportunity to influence policy to support the work of craft artists.

Larsen took on the position of Head of the Jewellery and Silversmithing Department at the Sydney College of the Arts in 1977, a position he held until his retirement from the University of Sydney in 1997. During this time, his unflagging advocacy for his craft involved him in the organisation and curatorship of a number of exhibitions of overseas

⁵⁰⁶ See Part 2 for discussion on Boyd's design for the Australian Pavilion at *Expo '67*. Boyd discusses *Expo 67* in 'A designer's world', *ibid.*, pp. 21–25.

travelling exhibitions of Australian jewellery and silversmithing and the co-ordination of European jewellery exhibitions touring in Australia.⁵⁰⁷ In 1986 the National Gallery of Victoria mounted a retrospective exhibition of Larsen's and Lewers' work, revealing an enduring thread of Danish design philosophy in work that nonetheless was a rich expression of their Australian experience.⁵⁰⁸

The early work of the Norwegian silversmith, Ragnar Hansen has been discussed in relation to his work at the Sturt Workshops. Hansen first showed his jewellery in Australia in an exhibition of the Sturt Group at a small gallery in Paddington, Sydney. The good response to his work in this show led to his first, sell-out, exhibition of silver hollowware at Sturt Workshops in 1972, in which his first coffee set and other vessels were included.⁵⁰⁹ Another of his works, a silver cigar case, was selected for inclusion in *In Praise of Hands*, the large exhibition of international craft staged for the 1974 World Crafts Council General Assembly in Toronto, Canada.⁵¹⁰ This work is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia. Hansen established the Gold and Silversmithing course at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education in Launceston in 1973. He remained there until 1981, when he took up the position of Head of the Gold and Silversmithing Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, a position he held until 2001.

Hansen felt that while he could produce works in Australia that had links with his upbringing, being here gave him the chance to break away from his Norwegian training to develop a more personal 'Australian' style based on the natural forms of landscape. Since his arrival in Australia, Hansen has sought to free himself of the Norwegian design traditions that influenced his training, instead looking at Australian vernacular imagery—such as corrugated iron water tanks, fencing wire and rusted farm equipment—as a source of design inspiration for his jewellery and vessels.⁵¹¹ Much of this detritus was at hand in his home environment on the historic Longford farm property near Launceston and found its way into large, expressive jewellery pieces. However, even using such rustic imagery, the fluid quality of his design and

⁵⁰⁷ Notes from the author's interview with Helge Larsen in Sydney, 27 May 1995.

⁵⁰⁸ The *Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers Retrospective Exhibition* was curated by Judith O'Callaghan, Curator of metalwork at the National Gallery of Victoria. It was shown there from 9 December 1986 to 15 February 1987, before touring in Australia until May 1988.

⁵⁰⁹ T Heath, 'Silverware and jewellery at Sturt', *Architecture in Australia*, February 1973, p. 92.

⁵¹⁰ O Paz, *In praise of hands*,

⁵¹¹ Notes from the author's interview with Ragnar Hansen, Canberra, 15 April 1997.

craftsmanship and the organic modernity of Scandinavian design remains evident. Some of the objects resulting from this experimental juxtaposition are deliberately ungainly and visually jarring and can be read as a deconstruction of a Scandinavian stereotype of formal perfection, by which *pathos* triumphs over *logos* and *ethos*.



Fig. 66
Ragnar Hansen, *Tea service* 1982, sterling silver and ebony.
Collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Hansen returned to Norway in 1985 for an exhibition of his work, at the *Kunstindustrimuseet i Oslo* (Museum of Decorative Arts and Design) in Oslo, held jointly with a former Norwegian colleague, who is now a silversmith and teacher in Canada. Hansen was unknown when he left Norway for Australia and this exhibition was something of a triumphal return, even though he felt that there was some disapproval from the Norwegian silversmithing community at his non-traditional asymmetrical style of work. The Museum acquired several of Hansen's works from this exhibition for its collection, as did the *Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum i Trondheim* (Museum of Decorative Arts, Trondheim).⁵¹²

Hansen maintained contact with former colleagues in Norway, particularly his teacher and mentor, Erling Christofersen, who ran the Norway Silver Design section of the Plus Workshops. Hansen's teaching and design philosophy matured during his teaching post in Canberra and has influenced a later generation of metalsmiths, the most notable among his former students being the Canberra designer, Robert Foster, who produces a range of organic metalwork designs in his Fink and Co workshop that, in many ways,

⁵¹² Notes from author's interview with Ragnar Hansen in Canberra, 15 April 1997.

embodies the spirit of Plus and Kilkenny. Hansen's successor at the Canberra School of Art, the German-born silversmith, Johannes Kuhnen, discussed Foster's work:

... under the influence of ... Hansen, Foster acquired a love of Scandinavian design, not as a style to be adopted for its own sake, but for its precision, clarity and reductive qualities, which he perceived as being able to work well with the forms and forces of nature he wished to express. As a result, his bowls, jugs and, latterly, furniture have a spare and concentrated quality, similar in a way to the notion of the poetic, as he seeks to convey to us a sense, subconscious or otherwise, of his experience of nature.⁵¹³

Among the most resourceful and successful of the émigrés was Fred Lowen (b.1919 Germany, as Fritz Löwenstein) who, with his later business partner, Ernest Rodeck (b.1919 Germany), arrived in Australia in 1940 on board the *Dunera* as transported German internees of the British. He was interned at camps in Hay, Orange and Tatura before being reclassified in 1942 as a 'Friendly Enemy Alien' and released for war work as a fitter and turner. Starting his own business in 1945, he initially produced turned wood bowls in the manner of Danish designer, Finn Juhl. Lowen and Rodeck formed their FLER furniture company in Melbourne in 1946, stimulating Lowen to undertake studies and training in furniture design and construction at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1949 to 1950.⁵¹⁴

FLER's first order of 500 'Swedish' chairs, designed by Fred Ward, was from Myer, Melbourne in 1948.⁵¹⁵ In a 1949 article, Isobel Kennedy quotes Lowen:

They are typically Swedish... They represent the entire Swedish way of living – plain lines. No unnecessary ornaments, light natural woods. The Swedes are simple in their ways of living.⁵¹⁶

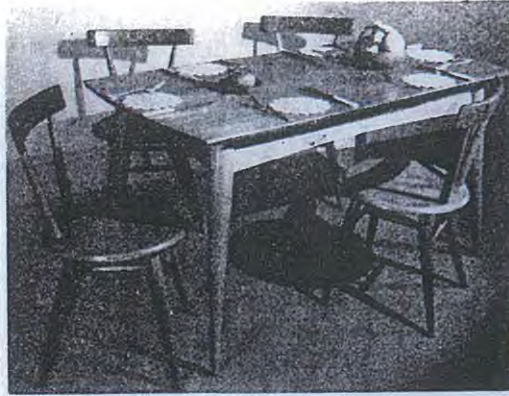
⁵¹³ Foster's work is discussed in J Kuhnen, 'Whimsical bravura', *Craft Arts International*, no. 22, 1991, pp. 36–38.

⁵¹⁴ *Retrospective Exhibition: Fred Lowen AM FDIA*, unpublished catalogue, Andersons Furniture Gallery, Melbourne, March 1988.

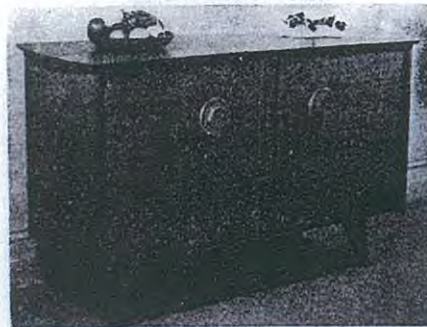
⁵¹⁵ FLER is an acronym of the partners' joined initials: F[red] L[owen] and E[rnest] R[odeck].

⁵¹⁶ I Kennedy, 'Simple but suave', *Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1949, p. 37. See also F Lowen, *Fred Lowen: Dunera boy, furniture designer, artist*, Prendergast Publishing, Castlemaine, 2000.

* Melbourne prices: Table & 4 chairs £43-8-0 or £49-12-0. Buffet £35 or £39.



FURNITURE BY FLER



Graceful Swedish Style Design and silken wax-finish bring out the natural beauty of the grain. Fashioned in carefully selected solid timbers.

Obtainable from—

Melbourne: Myer's, Christie's, Clausen's. Sydney: Anthony Hordern's
Adelaide: John Martin. Brisbane: Ferriday and Frazer (Southport).
and other Leading Stores

For catalogue write to: The FLER Co. 13-15 Wright St., Richmond, Victoria

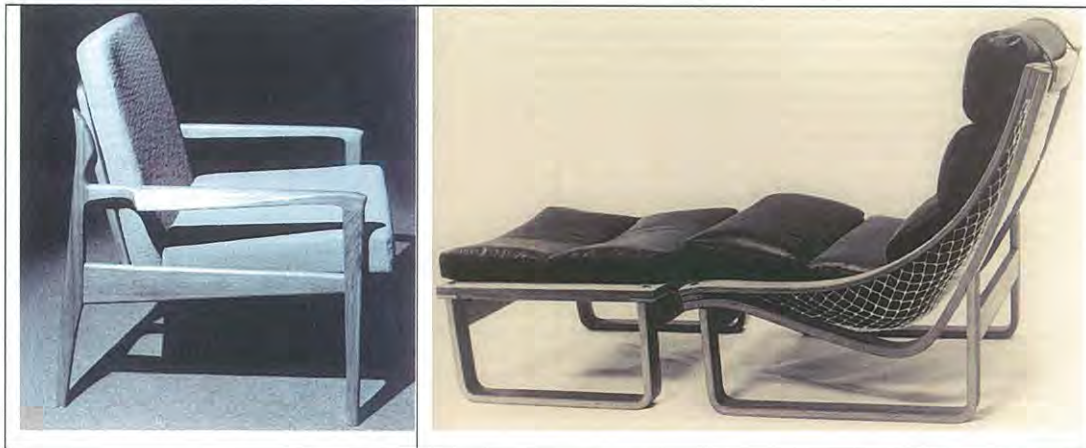
Fig. 67
FLER advertisement with Lowen's 'Swedish' chairs, 1952

The notion of simplicity of design as a response to functional requirements, along with the use of natural timbers, appealed to small manufacturers, who could produce furniture in relatively high volume without a crippling investment in expensive tooling and equipment. Such a craft-based approach to production gave their products the aura of the handmade. Hence, the design of much Australian furniture of the early 1950s emulated the clearly-expressed construction of post-war Swedish 'utility furniture', instead of the material complexity and expense of laminated wood structures, such as in the work of Alvar Aalto and Bruno Mathsson that had been developed in the 1930s.

Lowen and Rodeck's FLER company achieved success through a middle path, using the organic outlines of expensive Danish and Swedish designs to add value to otherwise straightforward and practical constructions in oiled and undecorated native Australian woods such as blackbean and blackwood. Such silhouettes were combined with softer upholstery styles in thin profiles made possible by the use of newly developed moulded

foam rubber and latex materials. These chairs were specifically designed with the postural needs of the new habit of television viewing in mind, ensuring a wide market penetration and the acceptance of a new type of informal and functional seating furniture for the home. On a trip to Sweden and Denmark in 1959, Lowen visited furniture factories to study production methods and, at the Dux factory in Malmö:

... learnt from the Swedes how to do certain operations by machine which we would have done laboriously by hand ... My visit to Denmark and Sweden had been so stimulating that I was eager to create new designs. I had seen how machines could simulate the look of handcrafted details, and this gave me much greater freedom of design. The prospects were exciting and the result – the Narvik dining and lounge ranges – were released in 1961.⁵¹⁷



Figs 68, 69
left: Fler *Narvik* chair designed by Fred Lowen 1961
right: Tessa *T-4* chair designed by Fred Lowen 1971

When FLER was taken over by Australian Controls in 1966, Lowen began to plan another company with his brother, Howard Lindsey, who had worked at FLER. They inaugurated the new company, Twen, in 1968 with a range of new designs with lavish upholstery over sculptural laminated wood frames. In 1970 the company name was changed to Tessa, producing a range of chairs in the series named *T-1* to *T-9*. These chairs, particularly the acclaimed 1971 *T-4* (*Hammock*) model, represent the most original and well-resolved Australian commercial interpretation of the design themes and features that had made Scandinavian furniture so unique: the spare, lightweight

⁵¹⁷ Lowen, op. cit., pp. 135–136.

laminated wood frame; the use of loose and light upholstery; the ergonomic design for the seating; and the visualisation of comfort.

Other immigrants with experience in furniture design worked within the Scandinavian design lexicon and became associated with innovative work in the commercial and educational sectors. John Andersson (b.1935 Denmark) arrived in Australia in 1962, having trained as an interior and furniture designer at the Academy of Fine Art in Copenhagen, under Professor Kaare Klint, graduating in 1958. He had worked with the Danish architect and designer, Finn Juhl, before accepting a position with the Australian architectural firm of Peddle Thorpe and Walker in Sydney in 1962.⁵¹⁸

The furniture designer and maker, George Ingham (b. 1940 Pakistan (British), d. 2003 Australia), arrived in Australia in 1982 to take up the inaugural position of Senior Lecturer and Head of the Wood Workshop at the Canberra School of Art. He had studied furniture design at Leeds College of Art from 1959 to 1961, followed by studies in the subject at the Royal College of Art from 1961 to 1964. For the following two years, he was design assistant to Antti Nurmesniemi in Helsinki, and also worked in the office of the Finnish designer, Matti Haime, before returning to Britain to work as a furniture designer for several companies. The legacy of his experience with Nurmesniemi can be seen in the rigorous and reductive design of his furniture and an acute appreciation of the qualities of natural materials and finishes. Like Nurmesniemi, he understood the graphic quality of furniture framework and allowed structure to define the visual quality of his work. He imparted this philosophy to students for almost twenty years, building the Canberra School of Art Wood Workshop as the authoritative centre for fine woodworking in Australia.⁵¹⁹

European immigrants with backgrounds in Scandinavian metalcraft training include Tor Schwank, Walraven van Heekeren and Niina Ots. Schwank (b.1935 Finland), trained as a silversmith and jeweller through the NKI Institute in Stockholm, Sweden,⁵²⁰ followed by a four-year apprenticeship at Atelier Elon Arenhill in Malmö. He arrived in Australia in 1961, taking up a position teaching at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

⁵¹⁸ Andersson's career is discussed in B Hayes and A Hersey, *Australian Style*, Paul Hamlyn, Sydney, 1970, pp. 167–171.

⁵¹⁹ Ingham's career is discussed in N Anderson, 'Renaissance in wood', *Craft Arts International*, October–December 1984, pp. 33–35. Ingham career details from *The spectrum of fine woodworking*, exh. cat., Beaver Galleries, Canberra, 4 March 1984.

⁵²⁰ The NKI was an institution offering design courses by correspondence.

He established his own business, Tor Design, in Melbourne, where he employed eight RMIT graduates in his workshop. He was awarded the Australian Jewellery Design Award for Young Moderns in 1972, for work that used abstracted landscape motifs in silver, titanium, slate and ivory.⁵²¹

Van Heeckeren (b.1944 The Netherlands) arrived in Australia in 1968. A silversmith and jeweller, he had studied under the Danish silversmith, Hans Christiansen, at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. He taught in Australia and was the first resident crafts practitioner at the Argyle Arts Centre in Sydney in the early 1970s. His apprentice was Barbara Rees.⁵²²

The jeweller, Niina Ots (b.1909 Estonia as Niina Taevere, d.1960 Australia), arrived in Australia in 1948, taking Australian citizenship in 1957. She established her own jewellery business, Anina Pty Ltd, in 1957 in Sydney's Rowe Street, and held her first exhibition in October 1959 at David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney.⁵²³ Rowe Street had been the city's 'bohemian' art and design precinct since the 1930s, and was also the address of the Notanda Gallery, which had been established in 1936 by Margo Lewers and was run during the 1950s by her brother, the painter, Carl Plate.⁵²⁴ Ots took on Lewers' daughter, Darani Lewers, as a jewellery apprentice in 1958, inculcating her with the appreciation of the use of silver and semiprecious stones that she would develop later in Denmark, working for Helge Larsen. Ots' own work derived from the traditions of Baltic jewellery but, with its bold scale and simple, fluid lines, was generally understood in the more familiar context of Scandinavian design.⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Tor Schwank artist file, NGA Reference Library.

⁵²² Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–184.

⁵²³ Anina Pty Ltd was run after Ots' death in 1960 by Ann and Ross Frazer.

⁵²⁴ The Notanda Gallery was managed from 1949 to 1961 by the author's cousin, Joyce Stewart (b.1917 Australia).

⁵²⁵ Ots' career is discussed in D Lewers et al., *Niina Ots jewellery and painting 1938–1994*, exh. cat., Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallery, Sydney, 1995.

22. Constructing a different language of modernity: integrating Scandinavian design into Australian art museum collections

The *Design in Scandinavia* touring exhibition played an important role in the diversification of Australian State art museum collections to include contemporary craft and industrial design.⁵²⁶ All of the Australian State art galleries at the beginning of the 1960s were to some extent modernising and reacting to the challenge that contemporary art was presenting to their images and their audiences. Most were developing plans for expansion into new or refurbished buildings and entering into more critical and strategic funding and sponsorship relationships with business and industry. The Art Gallery of New South Wales opened a new extension in 1971, the National Gallery of Victoria moved into its new building in 1968 and the Art Gallery of Western Australia was considering the design of an entire new building, which was not to be completed until 1979. The Australian National Gallery had been established in 1969, with the Federal Government commissioning its building in Canberra in 1973. Designed by Col Madigan from Madigan Briggs Torzillo Architects, it was completed and opened in 1982.

Social and natural history museums, such as the Australian Museum in Sydney and the Western Australian Museum in Perth, were also responding to design influences from the commercial design sector, with several major museums refurbishing displays or planning new exhibits in specially designed new wings or converted historic buildings. I acknowledge the exhibition's influence on my 1968–70 design program for the interior and exhibits of the Fremantle Museum, my first major design project with the Western Australian Museum, and also for my design program for its later permanent exhibition of its Australian Aboriginal artefacts collection, *Patterns of Life*, in its Aboriginal Gallery in 1972. In that project, I interpreted the curatorial narrative (which focused on indigenous Australians' responses to environment and need) in a sequential series of exhibition spaces with wall-size enlargements of historic black and white photographs of Aboriginal people in landscape, against which were juxtaposed tools and artefacts set on low platforms. I used this approach to collection display, which encouraged visitors' visual engagements with objects in a natural and informal way, in later projects for the Western Australian Museum, including the interior design and exhibits for the Old Perth Gaol and the Albany Residency Museum.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ Several State galleries participating in the tour acquired works from the exhibition for their collections. These acquisitions are detailed in Appendix 3. Objects from the exhibition were also sold to individuals, many of them influential in the design field.

⁵²⁷ The author was the Senior Exhibits Designer at the Western Australian Museum from 1967 to 1978.

By the mid-1960s, the inclusion of crafts and industrially produced articles in the exhibitions and collections of state galleries was beginning to be seen as desirable 'to show that art wasn't only a matter of painting and sculpture.'⁵²⁸ This diversification of their programs reflected the influence of prominent figures instrumental in the development of design organisations, art and design schools and the growing crafts movement on the attitudes of ambitious gallery directors, if not their boards and individual trustees.

By 1968, however, of the State art galleries, only the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of South Australia employed full-time curatorial staff dedicated to the development and management of their decorative arts collections. Most of these collections had been amassed since the early twentieth century, yet few other than the NGV's had been developed since the early 1950s in any systematic or strategic way, reducing their potential to be used in regular displays as exemplars of the development of modern design. In most galleries, if contemporary design or craft objects were included in collection displays, it was as an adjunct to, or as a support for a master narrative focused on painting, a display policy that remained largely sacrosanct and unchallenged.

As a packaged exhibition, *Design in Scandinavia* was an almost perfect vehicle for the galleries to trial, and possibly activate, such aspirations to diversification and audience development. Its content, presentation style and promotional strategies were honed from a decade of experience in art museums across North America and in France, and from half a century of promotions to critical audiences within Scandinavia. The quality, diversity and depth of its content could have formed a substantial part of any museum's modern decorative arts collection. It arrived in Australia with the highest level of international accreditation, its content already selected by prominent and experienced design professionals, under the royal patronage of Denmark, Norway and Sweden; the President of Finland and the Governor-General of Australia. It was presented under the auspices and curatorship of highly credible national design and craft organisations, overseen by a Committee of Honour comprising of the Scandinavian diplomatic representatives in Australia and the chairs of the State Galleries. That it was also informally underpinned by the entrepreneurial activities of a strong trade and retail network already in the business of importing Scandinavian products into Australia was

⁵²⁸ H Missingham, *They kill you in the end*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p. 61.

of critical benefit in promoting the exhibition and extending interest in its content from the comparatively narrow world of cultural institutions to the much broader and more popular arena of domestic design.

As it was designed to be easily configured to suit the facilities of each venue, the exhibition did not require participating museums to commit substantial resources to designing and supplying the exhibition furniture from scratch, allowing them, at least for the duration of the exhibition, to present themselves as agents of modernism in the arena of design.

The exhibition challenged assumptions of museums and art galleries of what was appropriate and relevant material for exhibition and acquisition, and validated the inclusion of contemporary applied arts and industrial design in decorative arts collections. The quality of the Scandinavian material that was made available to the participating galleries helped to shape their collection policies and aspirations. *Design in Scandinavia* served as an example for the exhibition and acquisition of Australian contemporary craft and design by art museums such as the Western Australian Art Gallery that had not previously given priority to those collection fields. For other galleries, with substantial decorative arts collections such as the National Gallery of Victoria and, to a lesser extent, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the exhibition offered the possibility to acquire contemporary works to update their collections and to provide some context for the few Scandinavian works represented in them. The media commentary generated by the exhibition opened up debate on the relationship between fine arts (painting, sculpture, printmaking and drawing) and design arts (industrial design, crafts and graphic arts) in public galleries, and exposure to the exhibition broadened the understanding of contemporary design and craft by many art critics, and indeed many of the staff and board members of those museums.

The following two case studies illustrate collection development based on the acquisition of Scandinavian decorative arts and design. The first examines the Western Australian Art Gallery's staging of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and its subsequent purchase of a number of exhibits from the exhibition. The second examines the National Gallery of Victoria's development of its decorative arts collection to include Scandinavian objects and its staging of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition.

Case study 1: The Western Australian Art Gallery (Art Gallery of Western Australia since 1977)

‘...[w]hy did *we* have to go to the *museum* to see pots and pans and kitchen knives?’ The 1968 Festival of Perth’s major exhibition, *Design in Scandinavia*, prompted this question from Perth art critic Patrick Hutchings, at the end of his review of the exhibition.⁵²⁹ Hutchings and other commentators throughout Australia used this exhibition to articulate concerns about the state of design and craft in Australia and the dearth of support and opportunities for local designers and makers:

...design of quality spread throughout a community and exported will only result from good education, far-sighted government policy and the existence of manufacturers willing to produce quality goods.⁵³⁰

In Perth, this elegant presentation of high European design created a dramatic contrast to its setting in the Gallery’s old and inadequate Beaufort Street building. As a paradigm for modern exhibition design, the exhibition became a focus of discussion among design professionals, accelerating the push for a long-desired new Gallery as a space which would be suitable for the presentation of craft and design as a vital facet of the visual arts, a goal that would not be achieved for another decade.

The Gallery’s Board of Trustees, under the Chairmanship of JAB (Jock) Campbell, had been finding its conservative attitude to the inclusion of contemporary art in its exhibition and acquisition programs increasingly under question since the early 1960s. Much of this criticism came from its own affiliated Art Gallery Society, whose membership included a wider and more diverse group of art and design professionals and interested individuals than those representing the Gallery’s interests on its Government-appointed Board. The Society attracted the membership and interest of prominent younger architects, such as Jeffrey Howlett (a principal of Howlett and Bailey, the architect of Perth’s new Council House, which opened in 1962), and promoters of design, such as the retailer, David Foulkes Taylor. Their enthusiasm for change enabled the Society to articulate in a more focused way the community’s dissatisfaction with Gallery’s progress towards planning of a new building and,

⁵²⁹ P Hutchings, ‘The arts of ambience: Design in Scandinavia and Oriental exhibition’, *The Critic*, no. 7, March 1968, p. 8.

⁵³⁰ R Wallace-Crabbe, ‘Awareness of design’, *Canberra Times*, 4 December 1968.

by implication, a new a more inclusive approach in its collection development to include design, craft and applied arts.

The Lord Mayor of Perth at the time of the 1962 Empire Games was (later, Sir) Harry Howard, a prominent retailer of electrical goods and furnishings in Perth and an avid promoter of Perth as a modern and progressive city. By the time of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, he had also taken on the role of Honorary Consul for Finland in Western Australia. In his assessment of the commercial ramifications of the exhibition, he points out the appeal of the exhibition to members of Perth's design and building sector:

... the exhibition commended itself in almost a record manner to a large section of the public. The outstanding feature of this, however, was that the exhibition was visited by artists and professional men of a wide variety who merely came and admired the exhibits and no doubt took note of their various features for the purpose of utilising them in work of their own private or professional construction ... The Art Gallery authorities are very pleased with the patronage and feel the exhibition will have created quite an anxiety to go further, as time elapses, on the part of those who visited.⁵³¹

This focus on design from the countries of Scandinavia had been a long time coming to Perth. In 1906, the Western Australian Art Gallery acquired a group of contemporary Scandinavian-designed objects of the early twentieth century, including examples of Royal Copenhagen Porcelain and exceptional examples of Danish-influenced St Petersburg Imperial Porcelain. These few acquisitions illustrated the prominence of such products as part of the widely influential early twentieth century Art Nouveau style, but later developments in design and the applied arts—from any source—were ignored by the Gallery until purchases began again in the early 1960s. These later acquisitions were a result of the increasing interest in Scandinavian design, through objects that had begun to be seen and purchased in Perth through importers such as the department store, Aherns, and the retailer and importer, David Foulkes Taylor.

The Western Australian Art Gallery (which was renamed as the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1978) had gained independence from the Western Australian Museum in 1959, with a newly independent Board of Trustees and Director. To establish its new identity, it modernised its Beaufort Street galleries, installing in its entry a small reading

⁵³¹ Letter from Harry Howard to The Attaché, Legation of Finland in Canberra, 22 March 1968, DISF/AGWA.

area furnished with a suite of Norwegian pine furniture (probably purchased through Aherns department store in Perth) and a Danish-influenced coffee table from the first production of David Foulkes Taylor. In 1962, the Gallery purchased several pieces of Finnish contemporary glass from an exhibition held at the Skinner Galleries in Perth (organised through David Foulkes Taylor). These works, designed by Saara Hopea, Timo Sarpaneva and Tapio Wirkkala, were displayed in several modern vitrines that had been built into the new 1959 interior arrangements in the Gallery's 1906 building. These few acquisitions demonstrated to the public the Gallery's new intentions to link its acquisition and exhibition programs to ideas of modernity in the decorative arts and design.

In 1968, the Gallery acquired a group of twenty Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish objects that had been included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. Perth, through its port of Fremantle, was the point of entry for the exhibition and it began its Australian tour at the Western Australian Art Gallery. The Gallery was therefore in a favourable position to exercise first choice in the selection for purchase of works from the exhibition. A number of the companies that had been lenders to the exhibition did not wish to pay for the return freight to Scandinavia and offered the works at wholesale prices or less, along with some gifts. The remainder of the works had been purchased for the exhibition through the organising body, which encouraged sales to offset the considerable cost of return freight and dispersal of the exhibits to Sweden at the conclusion of the exhibition. Other State galleries on the Australian tour also nominated works to be purchased from the exhibition to augment their contemporary decorative arts collections. From the outset of planning, there was an understanding between all parties that the individual exhibits could be sold in Australia to the participating State galleries and to individuals and companies associated with the exhibition, although the payment of duty was a vexatious issue that took several years after the event to resolve.

These works were of the finest quality and had been selected by the exhibition designer with the advice of highly experienced and qualified design professionals and curators in each of the four Scandinavian countries, providing the Western Australian Art Gallery with a small but impeccable collection.⁵³² Despite the enthusiastic public response to the exhibition and the favourable reviews it attracted, the acquired works were consigned to

⁵³² See Part 2 for discussion on the exhibition development and staging, and Appendix 3 for a listing of works purchased from the exhibition by Australian State art museums.

storage and seldom exhibited in the Gallery during the 1970s. Most of the objects were not displayed again until 1979.

Despite the Gallery's poor facilities and limited budget, many in the design and craft field welcomed its commitment to staging the exhibition and to acquiring a number of major works from it. It was read as a positive signal to those in Perth agitating for crafts and design to be included in the Gallery's collection policy, ushering in a decade of lobbying and discussion before this was to be achieved. The Gallery's showing of the *Henning Koppel* exhibition in 1973 and the *Adventures in Swedish Glass* exhibition in 1975 were further demonstrations of its growing commitment to the inclusion of contemporary design and craft in its exhibition program.⁵³³

The Craft Association of Western Australia, which had been established in 1968, took a lead role in discussions on the role of the State gallery in relation to the burgeoning Australian craft revival, and to Western Australian craft practitioners. Its members argued that recognition (and, through acquisition, official cultural validation) of the work of local craft practitioners by the Gallery was a crucial step in building a higher public profile and appreciation for crafts in general. As a result, works by Western Australian craft practitioners began to be included in the Gallery's exhibition program, most notably in the Gallery's internally generated exhibitions, *Western Australian Artists* in 1974 and *Ten Western Australian Craftsmen* in 1977.

The latter exhibition, from which several acquisitions were made, was the first to focus entirely on the work of Western Australian craft practitioners, most of whom were prominent artists and active members or office bearers of the Craft Association of Western Australia. It was also the catalyst for the establishment in 1978 of a full-time curatorial position for crafts, the first in an Australian art museum. The author was a participant in both the 1974 and 1977 exhibitions and was appointed to this curatorial position, as Curator of Craft, in February 1978.

The focus on 'craft' was recognition of the strength of Australian practice at the time. Other Australian art museums (the ANG, NGV, PHM, AGSA and QAG) had maintained 'decorative arts' departments since the early 1960s, which covered contemporary crafts in the broader context of the applied and decorative arts, but to a

⁵³³ See discussion the *Henning Koppel* exhibition on pp. 215–218.

lesser focus than the Art Gallery of Western Australia's new department. However, AGWA's 'craft' nomenclature also covered a wide spectrum of historical and contemporary applied and decorative arts. The department, and curatorial position, was re-named as Crafts and Design in 1980.

Following the creation of this curatorial department, the Scandinavian objects acquired in 1968 by designers such as Tapio Wirkkala, Dora Jung, Timo Sarpaneva, Henning Koppel, Freidl Kjellberg, Ole Wanscher and Kaj Franck were catalogued in detail by the author. Several works were un-crated for the first time since being wrapped, re-crated and returned to Perth following the exhibition's closure at its last venue in Canberra. Some were placed on display in the few available showcases in the Gallery's Beaufort Street building, in a final reconfiguration of the State art collection before the Gallery moved out, in 1979, to its new building on nearby Roe Street, Perth.

In this new setting, these works became key elements of the Gallery's displays of twentieth century art during the 1980s and 1990s, exhibited and interpreted in the wider context of twentieth century craft and design in the dedicated Craft and Design Gallery in the Gallery's new building. For the first time, these works could be shown as part of a design continuum that allowed visitors to make comparisons with Australian craft and design of the same period (the 1950s and 1960s). The Gallery's most comprehensive display of the works acquired from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was the exhibition, *Scandinavian Crafts and Design*, staged in 1987.

From 1978, the Gallery's collection was developed more strategically to include work by contemporary Scandinavian designers and makers in the context of the international and Australian craft revival. This focus included the acquisition of works by Scandinavian immigrants to Australia, such as silversmiths, Ragnar Hansen from Norway, and Helge Larsen and Vagn Hemmingsen from Denmark. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Gallery acquired glass works by Swedish artist, Bertil Vallien; ceramics by Danish artist, Henning Koppel; metalwork by Danish silversmiths, Johan Rohde and Georg Jensen; and furniture by Finnish designer, Alvar Aalto.

Although detail analysis of the development of the Art Gallery of Western Australia's craft and design collection from the 1980s is beyond the scope of this study, the following brief description of exhibitions that drove this development may be useful in

understanding the momentum generated by the Gallery's activities in the areas of craft, design and applied arts during the previous two decades.

From the late 1980s, historical Scandinavian works were also added to the Gallery's collection. These included ceramic works from the Danish companies, Royal Copenhagen, Bing & Grøndahl, and Herman Kähler; ceramics from the Swedish companies Rörstrand and Gustavsberg; and jewellery and metal works from Georg Jensen. A number of these were gifted to the Gallery by the Western Australian collector, Diether Hanisch, a German-born, Swedish émigré inspired to donate a large group of works from his extensive collection of Swedish and Danish decorative arts because of the Gallery's demonstrated commitment to displaying Scandinavian design as part of its program.⁵³⁴ These works were included in the 2000 exhibition (curated by the author), *Baltic Nouveau: Craft and Design 1890–1910*, which focused on Nordic interpretations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century styles of Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Arts and Crafts and National Romanticism.⁵³⁵

During the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the Gallery staged several exhibitions of contemporary craft and design that included Scandinavian works. These were less extensive than *Design in Scandinavia* but offered the opportunity for the public to see later developments of works by some of the artists who had participated in the 1968 exhibition.

From 8 December 1972 to 8 January 1973, the Gallery had shown *Architecture in Finland*, a touring exhibition prepared by the Museum of Finnish Architecture and brought to Australia under the auspices of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. To mark this occasion, the Museum of Finnish Architecture made a donation to the Gallery of a glass vase, the well-known *Savoy* model, designed by Alvar Aalto in 1936 and made in about 1970 by the Finnish firm of Iittala. The exhibition's 9,778 Perth visitors found (as they had with the earlier *Adventure in Swedish Glass* exhibition) the exhibition experience compromised by the Gallery's dated and poorly-designed spaces, amplifying the comparison between this venue and the exhibition's focus on

⁵³⁴ The author worked closely with Diether Hanisch from 1990 to 2000 to select and document works suitable for the Art Gallery of Western Australia collection, and curated the exhibition, *Baltic Nouveau*, in 2000 to showcase these acquisitions in the context of the Gallery's wider historical Scandinavian design collection. This exhibition was the author's last as Curator of Crafts and Design at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, before his move to the National Gallery of Australia in 2000.

⁵³⁵ R Bell, 'Baltic Nouveau: Craft and design 1890–1910', *Artifacts*, July–August 2000, n.p.

environmentally responsive public buildings, and furthering commentary on the need for a new Gallery building.⁵³⁶

The third of the Gallery's recurrent international craft exhibitions, the *Third Australian International Crafts Triennial: Nature as Object: Craft and Design from Japan, Finland and Australia*, was held in 1998.⁵³⁷ This exhibition focused on the work of craft artists and designers from Japan, Finland and Australia whose work developed in response to the natural world and put forward my thesis that the work of such artists in each of these countries shared similar aims in giving form to the different resonances of nature in their lives and cultural environments. It presented the opportunity to extend the Gallery's Craft and Design collection with the acquisition of works from several of the participating Finnish artists: ceramics by Fujiwo Ishimoto; glass by Kerttu Nurminen; textiles by Ritva Puotila; jewellery by Janna Syvänoja; and textiles by Ulla-Maija Vikman.⁵³⁸ Puotila's woven textiles had been included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, but while her studio weaving had not been seen in Australia since 1968, her designs for rugs and table linens for her textile company, Woodnotes, were sold through specialist retailers in Australia since the early 1990s.

In October 2003, the Gallery mounted the exhibition, *Kool: Scandinavian Design Meets West Australian Style*, drawing from its collection of Scandinavian works to show their influences on the work of Western Australian craft artists and designers of the 1960s, particularly that of design entrepreneur David Foulkes Taylor and his circle. Those organising this exhibition had no direct experience of the original context of the works when they were displayed in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and, gauging from the label texts, little understanding of the history of the works, their designers and makers and the influences upon them. The resulting exhibition revealed its lack of design rigour, with objects displayed in crude Styrofoam wall niches and platform modules, reducing the experience of the works to that of a collectibles exhibition or fashionable retro design shop, but lacking the carefully crafted precision of the retail-like experience encountered in the original exhibition thirty-five years before. The exhibition tested the power of objects to communicate their function and cultural references, but the visitor experience was hampered through its lack of reference to the

⁵³⁶ Australian architect, Harry Seidler, wrote the catalogue introduction for the *Architecture in Finland* exhibition. See discussion of this on p. 128.

⁵³⁷ In Finland in 1997, the author visited artists, craft and design centres and museums in Helsinki, Iittala, Nuutajärvi, Fiskars and Jyväskylä to undertake research for this exhibition.

⁵³⁸ These works are detailed in Bell, Stenros & Hida, op. cit., pp. 68–91.

tight organisation and rigorous attention to juxtaposition and context of the original, which had so convincingly revealed the logos, ethos and pathos of the works. This criticism is one reading of the exhibition's curatorial thesis, and informed by the author's previous custodianship of this material; for other viewers however, it would have introduced a subject and an exploration of design relationships that could influence taste as *Design in Scandinavia* had done for an earlier generation.

Case study 2: National Gallery of Victoria

The Director of the National Gallery of Victoria during the 1960s, Eric Westbrook, was a guiding force in the development of the Gallery's decorative arts collection. As Australia's largest and most comprehensive collection of decorative arts, it had been an important study resource for designers and makers since the Gallery's foundation in the nineteenth century. Unlike the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the NGV had made a continuous commitment to the decorative arts since its inception, building a rich and diverse collection of European production. Its first acquisitions of modern Scandinavian decorative arts were made in the late 1940s, finding favour and support from Melbourne's architecture and design community.⁵³⁹

Potters had access to the Gallery's growing collection of contemporary Swedish, Danish and Finnish ceramics since they were acquired in the early 1950s and one can see the influence of these organic modernist pieces in their work later in the decade. Among them was the architect and potter, Ian Sprague (1920–1994 Australia), who in 1964 established The Craft Centre in South Yarra to sell and promote high quality and well-designed contemporary craft. His own home and studio in Upper Beaconsfield housed a collection Scandinavian-designed objects and was a source of inspiration to his colleagues, particularly the potter, Victor Greenaway (b.1947 Australia), who began study under him in 1969. Greenaway's interest in design had been stimulated after seeing the National Gallery of Victoria's 1962 *Design for Living* exhibition. In 1974, Greenaway was awarded a Churchill Fellowship, during which he visited craft and design centres and workshops in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, seeing at first hand a disciplined approach to production ceramics that continues to characterise his practice.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹ See Appendix 3 for a list of the NGV's acquisitions of Scandinavian material.

⁵⁴⁰ Notes from the author's conversation with Victor Greenaway in Perth, 2000.

Eric Westbrook was a founding member of the Industrial Design Council of Australia, which connected its aims to improve design standards in Australia with moves by the NGV and other Australian state galleries to stage exhibitions of Scandinavian design. He mounted the exhibition, *Design for Living*, at the NGV in 1962 in conjunction with the Council of Adult Education and the Education Department of Victoria, with the aim to show, and improve the appreciation of, good domestic design. Twenty-five Scandinavian-designed products were included among the eighty objects selected for the exhibition, which toured to all of the state art galleries in Australia during 1962 and 1963.⁵⁴¹

Through his Deputy Director, Gordon Thomson, Westbrook initiated the first discussions with the Finnish Society of Craft and Design on the desirability of an exhibition of Scandinavian design in 1962 and subsequently lobbied his Australian State Gallery colleagues to adopt the proposal.⁵⁴² Although the development of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition was taken over in 1965 by the Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham, Westbrook's and Thomson's commitment to the project remained a crucial strength, and enabled it to be scheduled at a critical time in the NGV's development.

The exhibition was the second major event to be held in the NGV's new St Kilda Road building in 1968, following on from its successful *The Field* exhibition. For the new audiences attracted to the Gallery's new building, that exhibition was an introduction to the new wave of Australian art, encompassing a regional expression of the international movements of hard edge abstraction and colour-field painting of the 1960s. Audiences found the celebration of colour and form evident in *The Field* repeated in the strong graphics, clear colours and sculptural forms of the textiles and objects in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition that followed.

⁵⁴¹ E Westbrook, 'Introduction', *Design for living*, Council of Adult Education and Education Department of Victoria, Melbourne, 1962. See discussion on this exhibition in Part 2.

⁵⁴² The first communication on this matter was a letter from Thomson to HO Gummerus, Director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design on 25 September 1962, referring to a favorable report by Ian Mangan, of the Reserve Bank of Australia, on the Society's 1962 *Finlandia* exhibition in Lyngby, Denmark, and inquiring about the possibility of it touring to Australia. (DISF/TK). See Part 1 for a full discussion of this sequence of events.

The coincidence of scheduling these two seemingly different exhibitions one after the other in the new NGV's inaugural program linked painting, sculpture and design as facets of the same modernity. Of all of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition's venues, the NGV was the most visually and conceptually compatible with the works on display. Its interiors reflected an acquired Scandinavian sensibility in their use of light wood panelling, refined natural materials and management of natural light within a powerful and fortress-like exterior structure. Since the late 1940s, the NGV's architect, Roy Grounds, along with his partner, the architect and design critic and commentator, Robin Boyd, had been an advocate for the appropriateness of Scandinavian models for architecture and town planning. Both had been part of an influential circle initiating discussions on these ideas in relation to major government projects, such as the new building for the National Gallery of Victoria.

In 1968, the National Gallery of Victoria's Curator of Decorative Arts, Kenneth Hood, recommended to his Board the purchase of fourteen objects that he had selected from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition, which was then on show at the Gallery. His submission noted that the Gallery had acquired few modern objects since 1952, when a large group of contemporary Scandinavian-designed furniture and objects in silver, glass and ceramics had been selected by the NGV's London-based advisor and purchased with funds from its Felton Bequest.⁵⁴³ Hood stressed that the works were of a higher quality than would normally be available in Melbourne and, at a total price of \$3,043 for the group, represented exceptional value. Six works from the group proposed were eventually acquired.⁵⁴⁴

A further forty-one Finnish objects were presented to the Gallery in 1968 by Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, the Australian importer and distributor of Finnish products. Some of these works were the same models as those that had been included in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. The company's director, Raoul Baudish, was, as previously discussed, a behind-the-scenes driving force in the development of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition and undoubtedly used the staging of the exhibition as an opportunity to donate Finnish-designed and made objects, then on commercial sale in Australia, to the Gallery, with the expectation that they would be displayed there.

⁵⁴³ The National Gallery of Victoria's London advisor was John McDonnell.

⁵⁴⁴ From National Gallery of Victoria 1968 Board minutes: Agenda item: 'Submissions from vote', Victorian Public Records Office reference VPRS 12730/P/1, Unit 90, File, 1968. See list of works acquired by the NGV from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Appendix 3.

This proved to be a correct assumption, as the Gallery regularly drew from this part of its collection for its displays of twentieth century European decorative arts and design. The architectonic rhetoric that united the objects in *Design in Scandinavia* resonates through the current displays of selections from its international decorative arts collection in the NGV International building. These exhibits include an extensive group of Danish, Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian objects acquired from about 1950 to the present, including a number of works acquired from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition. Their chronological placement with other European and American crafts and industrial design objects from the early twentieth century to the present allows the visitor to clearly see the how the particular characteristics of Scandinavian design—the *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* evident in its naturalism, quality of materials, spare design and decoration, and clearly-expressed functionality—have been maintained and developed.

In both the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria, the expansion of their modern design, craft and applied arts collections afforded by the opportunity to acquire from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition set a new platform of excellence for visitors and researchers. The acquired works provided a credible standard of comparison for the parallel development of their Australian craft and design collections. These two examples of collection development stemming from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition are evidence of its importance as an agent of change, not only in the wider understanding of contemporary craft and design, but also for museums as they sought to expand their influence and build new audiences.

The protracted planning period for the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition paralleled discussions in Australia on the role of cultural agencies in relation to the development and promotion of craft and design. The exhibition's eventual arrival in 1968 coincided with the establishment of craft associations across Australia, demonstrating the quality of work being aspired to by those nascent organisations. The well-developed cultural narrative implicit in the exhibition was acknowledged as a key to its success in linking design with other arts. It demonstrated an approach to design through which Australians were to find their own expressions through craft practice

Conclusion

This study shows how the introduction of Scandinavian consumer goods and applied arts to Australia during the period of 1950 to 1980 exerted a demonstrable and positive influence on the creation of a climate of receptiveness to modern design. By being presented through the channels of diplomacy, trade and cultural agency promotion, Scandinavian industrial and handcrafted objects exemplified a high level of cultural achievement in countries that otherwise had little influence in Australia, and about which little was generally known. The Swedes, Danes, Norwegians and Finns asked us to understand their cultures through their contemporary artefacts that were presented in exhibitions and trade promotions. For those practicing in and promoting Australia's nascent design and craft industries, the comparison of their work with the highly developed and refined output of even smaller countries was an evaluative process that stimulated a questioning of Australia's capacity to develop, support and nurture these fields of practice.

The examination of the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition's objectives, content, reception and significance as a peak design event of the 1960s reveals its lasting impact on many Australians' definition of successful and appropriate design. The cultural authority of this exhibition, its predecessors and subsequent events articulated a different form of modernity to which Australian consumers, designers, businesses and cultural agencies could aspire. These events, and the objects presented within them, challenged the accepted cultural supremacy of arts such as painting and sculpture within the context of Australian State art museums, broadening the definition of modernism and extending several of those institutions' fields of acquisition into the fields of design and crafts. This diversification of collections brought several major institutions into debates on the role of design and craft as cultural production that were being articulated from the late 1960s by craft and design industry organisations and the Australia Council.

The assumption of an audience for the rhetoric of Scandinavian design superiority grew from the views and desires of an emergent Australian design elite only beginning to articulate its own definitions of taste.⁵⁴⁵ Most Australians had little direct experience of

⁵⁴⁵ The emergence of a social and critical structure in the field of crafts, and the potential for practitioners to contribute social and moral meaning to human experience, is discussed in J Freeman, 'The discovery of

the cultures that produced these objects, making it difficult to interpret the propaganda of the ubiquity of good design promoted by Scandinavia's design agencies. Most of the exhibitions of Scandinavian-designed and produced material seen in Australia were focused on applied arts and craft objects, though many of them were unique, rare and expensive luxury goods that would have been beyond the reach of ordinary people in their countries of origin. When disconnected from the context of the problems and realities of everyday life in urban centres, such objects constituted a vision of Scandinavia as a design utopia, free from the ugliness, bad planning and social problems inherent in most developed countries. These objects stood in for cultural values only faintly understood, and most Australians (as well as many people in countries where similar exhibitions were staged) formed a large part of their views on Nordic life from their exposure to examples of these desirable, and in many cases unattainable, objects that they imagined were owned and used by people throughout the Nordic region.

The roles of designers as cultural agents, and of consumer goods as cultural messengers, were new concepts in a period where the fine and performing arts were the accepted means for engaging with another culture. Whether it was through exhibitions, retail promotions, magazine articles or visits by artists and designers, each aspect of Scandinavian design that was introduced to Australia from the early 1950s played a part in Australians' understanding of the centrality of carefully designed objects in the lives of ordinary people living in the Nordic world. Presented in the accessible environments of retail shops and public art galleries, each object encountered gave cause for questioning of the local product, needling Australians' sense of inferiority in matters of design and applied arts—a view propagated by a number of Australian design commentators and art critics as they encountered the Scandinavian example. Perhaps for the first time, the exposure to Scandinavian design elicited an emotional response from viewers as they responded to the physical qualities of objects before them and considered the possibilities of an Australian interpretation.

The rhetoric of Scandinavian design promotion has not faltered, whether it has been articulated through the operations of small businesses, official presentations, exhibitions, or the work of individual companies and designers. Each method of

the commonplace or establishment of an elect: Intellectuals in the contemporary craftworld', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 2, nos 2 & 3, 1989, pp. 64–65.

articulation presented Scandinavian design achievement as the result of an organised, edited and resolved process, using a multiplicity of objects to amplify the sense that good design was, if not ubiquitous, then at least acknowledged and valued in the lives of many Nordic people. This may have been true, but such rhetoric masked the slow, organic creative process of design and the achievement of craft skills required to give form to ideas. While Danish, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian designers were presented to us as fully-formed professionals, their work—like that of all creative people—did not spring forth from their studios without them having experienced long periods of rigorous training, experimentation, dead-ends, technical failures, isolation and doubt. What made them different from their Australian counterparts was the organisation and promotion of their creative output and the culture of pride in design achievement that was a central part of their countries' cultural agendas.

The period of reception of such resolved and refined Scandinavian design coincided with a time of unprecedented creative experimentation in Australian craft and design. Its results, however, were not to find support in the production programs of manufacturers or applied arts businesses, few that there were, but in the wider public acceptance of the work of individuals, and the unique objects they produced, as signifiers of personal experience. Australian craft practitioners and designers could see from the Scandinavian example how the distillation of experience could take the form of production objects. A thousand objects in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition offered evidence of this, clarifying and reinforcing the roles of crafts practitioners and designers as cultural agents, validated and given authority by being positioned within the cultural framework of art museums.

The viewers of these exhibitions and the purchasers of Scandinavian products found in these experiences links to an imagined Scandinavian life of simple, practical clarity where the natural world was interpreted through poetic and elegant objects. The intimacy of Scandinavian-designed domestic objects and the subtle distinctions in their forms, textures and decoration have provided a lexicon of clues by which to navigate a different way of functioning in the domestic environment. The shape, texture, weight and light-reflective qualities of, for example, a spoon handle, a chair arm, a drinking glass rim, a dinner plate or a child's chair are small, nuanced gestures informed by an understanding of the properties and feel of materials. For a growing Australian audience, the experience and recognition of the expressive interpretation of such

gestures in Scandinavian products cumulatively affected a change of attitude to the aesthetics and practicalities of functioning in the world. To imbue everyday objects with cultural values based on such qualities proved to be a more convincing and enduring strategy for the Scandinavian and Australian design and craft industries than the delivery of grand public statements or manifestos.

The embrace of Scandinavian production accustomed Australian eyes to see in the nascent Australian crafts movement a form of the same set of values. The work of Australian furniture designers, metalsmiths, jewellers, glassmakers, ceramicists and textile artists and designers emerged with vigour during our imaginings of Nordic design superiority, presenting a grittier reality and a genuine reflection of the Australian experience.

The emergence of this strong craft culture in Australia bolstered with support from its advocacy and funding organisations overtook the development of the design industry, which was still largely locked in self-criticism and envy of Scandinavian, and other European and American design achievements. This was not the planned, or desired, trajectory for the Australian design industry, and its considerable achievements in industrial, environmental, fashion and graphic design would not be fully realised and recognised until the 1990s. Studio crafts, however, remained unsupported by an industrial structure, encouraging self-reliance and a vigorous culture of experimentation, risk-taking and cultural criticism that has given its practitioners' work the aesthetic and material authority of the Scandinavian exemplars that earlier presented such a challenge to our material culture.

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Appendices

- 1 *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition reports and reviews (chronology)
- 2 List of exhibitors in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition
- 3 Scandinavian objects acquired from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australian public museum and art gallery collections
- 4 Cultural, trade and commercial exhibitions of Scandinavian-designed objects in Australia

Appendix 1

***Design in Scandinavia* exhibition reports and reviews in newspapers and journals (chronology)**

'Designs', *West Australian*, 10 February 1968.

(Photo of Vuokko Nurmesniemi assisting with installation of DIS in Perth at WAAG.)

Merrifield, H, 'Exhibition is perfection in design', *West Australian*, 1968.

(Discussion on Scandinavian design societies, handcrafting and way of life. Mentions 'to educate our people to want and accept only the best'.)

Thomas, A, 'Setting up the Design in Scandinavia exhibition at the Art Gallery', *West Australian*, 15 February 1968.

Knott, L, 'Time for action not words', *Sunday Times*, 18 February 1968.

(Criticism of WAAG facility during DIS showing in Perth.)

'Finds expression in design', *Advertiser*, 20 February 1968.

(Discussion on Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi's visit to Adelaide with DIS, and her clothing designs.)

'Scandinavian craft show', *Advertiser*, 20 February 1968.

Knott, L, 'Inspired art', *Sunday Times*, 3 March 1968.

(Discussion on affinity between Scandinavian and Oriental exhibitions in Perth.)

'Women design for homes, industry', *West Australian*, 3 March 1968.

(Interview with Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, discussing design in Scandinavia and women's role in design awareness.)

Graham, D, 'Discrepancies', *The Bulletin*, 9 March 1968.

(Discussion on WAAG inadequacies for DIS exhibition.)

Hutchings, P, 'Designs to live with', *Australian*, 13 March 1968.

(Discussion on potential influence of Scandinavian design on design in Australia. Mentions 'teaching us a great deal if we care to learn'.)

Furnishing writer 1968, 'Works on design...of everything!', *Advertiser*, 21 March 1968.

(Discussion on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg's background and her role with DIS in Adelaide.)

Hutchings, P, 'The arts of ambience: Design in Scandinavia and Oriental exhibition', *The Critic*, vol. 8, no. 7, 22 March 1968, p. 69–70.

(Discussion on historical background to DIS exhibits and makes comparisons between Scandinavian and Australian design as exemplified by DIS exhibition at WAAG in Perth.)

'Decor on display', *Advertiser*, 26 March 1968.

'Ambassador sees exhibition opened', *News*, 28 March 1968.

(Reports on Danish Ambassador to Australia Emil Blytgen-Petersen's visit from Canberra for opening of DIS in Adelaide. Notes on event guests.)

'Display of Nordic design opens', *Advertiser*, 29 March 1968.

'Artifacts', *News*, 30 March 1968.

Young, E, 'Beauty on the kitchen shelf', *Advertiser*, 1 April 1968.
(Discussion on the role of designers in industry in Scandinavia, mentioning the 'lesson' to be learned from DIS.)

Hawkes, E, 'Artistic design of Scandinavia', *Advertiser*, 2 April 1968.
(Description of objects in DIS in Adelaide and mentions 'lesson'.)

'Taideteollisuudelle kiitos Australiasta', *Uusi Suomi*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Pohjoismaiden muotoilua Australiassa', *Aamuhleti*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Pohjoismaisella muotoilulla suurmenstys Australiassa', *Ylä-Vuoski*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Pohjoismainen muotoilu sai kiitosta Australiassa', *Etelä-Suoment Sanomat*, Finland, 3 April 1968. (Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Pohjoismaista muotoilua arvostetaan', *Kouvolan Sanomat*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Muotoilullamme hyvä menestys Australiassakin', *Ilkka*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Designframgång i Australien', *Hufvudstadbladet*, Finland, 3 April 1968.
(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

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(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

'Fashion focus', *News*, 4 April 1968.
(Commentary on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg's dress style and fashions.)

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(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

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(Report on HO Gummerus' and Antti Nurmesniemi's visit to Australia with DIS.)

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(Discussion on DIS installation at AGNSW, commenting that the Gallery looks like a department store.)

Young, E, 'Interest in this display', *Advertiser*, 7 April 1968.
(Discussion on role of designers in industry in Scandinavia. Mentions 'lesson'.)

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(Discussion on Scandinavian products on display at Craftsman's market, Toowong during DIS at QAG in Brisbane.)
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- Langer, DG, 'Superb exhibition from Scandinavia', *Brisbane Courier Mail*, 15 May 1968.
(Discussion on exhibition, mentioning 'serve to educate public taste...'.)
- Hutchings, P, 'Vikings in the Bauhaus', *Art and Australia*, June 1968, pp. 23–24.
(Discussion on Nordic themes in exhibits in DIS as an exemplar for Australian design.)
- Gambie, G, 'Scandinavia's 'pots and pans' art exhibition', *Sun*, 25 June 1968.
(Discussion on placement of commercial Scandinavian products in DIS exhibition at AGNSW in Sydney.)
- 'An exhibition', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June 1968.
(Brief report of interview with Anders Hostrup-Pedersen, president of Georg Jensen, on his arrival in Sydney for the DIS exhibition at AGNSW. He quotes Hostrup-Pedersen: 'Perhaps you haven't been doing as much as we have in Scandinavia as far as design goes. You are some years behind Scandinavia in that field, but you really are doing a great deal.')
- Lynn, E, 'Intriguing sobriety', *The Bulletin*, no.13, July 1968.
(Commentary on notion of 'good design' in Scandinavian products in DIS at AGNSW, making comparisons between functional objects and those with sculptural qualities.)
- 'Norwegian style is rugged, beautiful', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968.
- Lewis, A, 'A practical designer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968, p. 18.
(Discussion on Yrjö Kukkapuro furniture designs included in DIS.)
- Castle, R, 'Someone to spoon with', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 July 1968.
(Brief report on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg role with DIS at AGNSW.)
- Lewis, A, 'Fashion's enemy is design genius', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968, p. 19.
(Discussion on the work of Armi Ratia, founder of Marimekko, and Marimekko company history.)
- 'Glowing glass shaped into art', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968.
(Discussion on Lindshammar Glass in Småland, Sweden, and the work of glass artists, Erik Høglund, Mona Morales-Schildt, Ann Wärf, Göran Wärf.)
- 'Woven rya rugs', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968.
- 'Lamp has many uses', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968.
- 'Moving shadow', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968.
- Missingham, H, 'Four years of work', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968, p. 17.
(Discussion on Missingham's role in organising the DIS exhibition, mentioning 'educating taste'. Includes excerpt from DIS catalogue introduction.)
- 'Beautiful articles for everyday use', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1968, p.17.
- 'The way to make us envious', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1968.

'Research', *Daily Mirror*, 9 July 1968.

(Brief article posing question, 'what have we learned from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition now at the Art Gallery?')

Bruce, J, 'She has built a career on design', *Australian Women's Weekly*, July 17 1968.

(Discussion on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg's career, her travels in Australia with DIS exhibition, and the role of women in the design field in Scandinavia.)

'Girl who has everything', *Sunday Mirror*, 17 July 1968.

(Discussion on the career of Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg and her role with DIS.)

Henshaw, J, 'Scandinavia's unique brew: Fantasy mixed with function', *Australian*, 20 July 1968. (Discussion of DIS exhibition, mentioning that it is 'instructive in many ways...')

'An eye for beauty', *The Advocate*, 14 August 1968.

'Modern image', *Mercury*, 16 August 1968.

'Furniture exhibition: Scandinavia shows off its designs', *Mercury*, 23 August 1968.

Flockart, A, 'Scandinavian art is functional, aesthetic', *Saturday Evening Mercury*, 31 August 1968. (Discussion on industrial design and Scandinavian creative energy and 'why it doesn't happen here.')

'Exhibition ending', *Mercury*, 12 September 1968.

'Craftsman's art', *Mercury*, 6 September 1968.

Andrews, C, 'The skills of Scandinavia', *Sun*, 3 October 1968, p.2

'Designs from Denmark', *Age*, 3 October 1968.

(Discussion on *Danish De Luxe* furniture, and role of its directors, Neville Ashkenazy, John Westacott and Borg Gjortsvang.)

Mort, K, 'Have exhibition, will travel', *Sun*, 4 October 1968.

(Discussion on Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg's career and her work with the DIS exhibition planning and organisation.)

'Scandinavian exhibits go on display', *Age*, 4 October 1968.

Gleeson, J, 'Lesson from Europe', *Sun*, 7 October 1968.

(Discussion on DIS at AGNSW and concurrent *Finnish Design* exhibition at Blaxland Gallery in Sydney. Mentions 'school for designers' and states that 'if lessons are properly absorbed, it can only lead to a rise in quality.')

McCulloch, A, 'Emphasis on Nordic craft', *Herald*, 9 October 1968.

(Discussion on design as a major industry in Scandinavia. Makes comparison of Danish stainless steel bowl in DIS with the roof shells of the Sydney Opera House.)

McCaughey, P, 'Scandinavian naturalness', *Age*, 12 October 1968.

(Discusses the success of Scandinavian design infiltration in Australia.)

'Showcase', *Sun*, 13 October 1968.

Anne, P, 'Scandinavian showcase', *Weekly Times*, 23 October 1968.

'Scandinavian design', *Canberra Times*, 29 November 1968.
(Discussion on the historical development, basic artistic spirit and benefit of designers to industry in Scandinavia. Includes image of glass work by Nils Landberg.)

'Design in Scandinavia', *Sunday Telegraph*, 1 December 1968.
(Discussion on opening of DIS at ANU, Canberra, and comments from Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg.)
'Exhibiting design takes many skills', *Canberra Times*, 4 December 1968.
(Discussion of Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg's role as organiser of DIS in Canberra.)

Wallace-Crabbe, R, 'Awareness of design', *Canberra Times*, 4 December 1968.
(Discussion on DIS, making comparison between Scandinavian and Australian design and noting that there are good economic reasons to promote good design.)

'Exhibition's ending means hard work', *Canberra Times*, 7 January 1969.
(Discussion on the role of DIS Secretary-General, Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, at end of DIS tour.)

'Formrevy [Form review]: Design in Scandinavia', *Form*, n.d. 1969.

Appendix 2

List of exhibitors in the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition

Ceramics

Country	Manufacturer/studio	Designers/makers	Australian agent
Denmark	A/S Herman A Kähler	Nils Kähler	
Denmark	Bing & Grøndahl	Henning Koppel Erik Magnussen Sten Lykke Madsen	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Denmark	Dansk Designs	Niels Refsgaard	Danfield Pty Ltd, Crows Nest , NSW Forum Pty Ltd, Melbourne
Denmark	Saxbo Stentøj	Nathalie Krebs & Eva Staehr- Nielsen	Unik Import, Double Bay, NSW
Denmark	The Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory Ltd	Kari Christensen Grethe Meyer Axel Salto Gertrud Vasegaard	James L Hudson Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Finland	Oy Wärtsilä Ab-Arabia	Rut Bryk Göran Bäck Kaj Franck Liisa Hallamaa Annikki Hovisaari Birger Kaipainen Friedl Kjellberg Francesca Lindh Richard Lindh Toini Muona Gunvor Olin-Grönqvist Ulla Procopé Raija Tuumi	Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Norway	Dagny and Finn Hald Studio Pottery	Dagny and Finn Hald	
Norway	Erik Pløen Studio Pottery	Erik Pløen	
Norway	Porsgrunds Porselaensfabrik	Leif Helge Enger Tias Eckhoff Konrad Galaaen Grete Rønning Eystein Sandnes Anne Marie Ødegaard	Lee, Monteith & Biggs Pty Ltd, Brisbane, QLD
Norway	Stavangerflint A/S	Kaare B Fjeldsaa	Peter Marich & Co Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Sweden	AB Gustavsberg Fabriker	Bengt Berglund Karin Björquist Stig Lindberg	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Sweden	Bertil Vallien Studio Pottery	Bertil Vallien	

Sweden	Höganäs-Kermik AB	John Andersson Hertha Bengtson	Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Sweden	Signe Persson-Melin Studio	Signe Persson-Melin	

Furniture

Denmark	AJ Iversen	Ole Wanscher	
Denmark	E Kold Christensen A/S	Poul Kjærholm	
Denmark	Fredericia Stolefabrik	Børge Mogensen	
Denmark	Fritz Hansens Eft A/S	Peter Hvidt & Orla Molgaard- Nielsen Arne Jacobsen	Aherns Pty Ltd, Perth, WA
Denmark	Getama A/S	Hans J Wegner	
Denmark	Interna	Mogens Koch	
Denmark	Johannes Hansen's Møbelsnedkeri	Hans J Wegner	
Denmark	Niels Vodder	Finn Juhl	
Denmark	Rud Rasmussens Snedkerier	Kaare Klint Mogens Koch	
Denmark	Willy Beck	Ejner Larsen & Axel Bender Madsen	
Finland	Haimi Oy	Yrjö Kukkapuro	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Finland	Norrmak Handicraft	Kristian Gullichsen Bengt af Schultén	
Finland	Oy Artek Ab	Alvar Aalto Antti Nurmesniemi	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Norway	A Grasaasens Fabrikker	Cato Mansrud & Sigurd Resell	
Norway	Asker Stålmøbelfabrikk A/S	Tormod Alnaes	
Norway	Brødrene Blindheim	Ingemar Relling	
Norway	Dokka-Møbler	Sven Ivar Dysthe	Artes Studios, Sydney, NSW
Norway	Hove Møbler A/S	Hans Bratterud	
Norway	Møre Lenestolfabrikk A/S	Sven Isar Dysthe	Danish Design Agency, Melbourne, VIC
Norway	Trybo A/S	Edwin Helseth	

Norway	Vestlandske Stol-og Møbelfabrikk	Ingemar Relling	Danish Design Agency, Melbourne, VIC
Sweden	AB Karl Ruthérs Inredningar	Börge Lindau & Bo Lindekrantz	
Sweden	Firma Karl Mathsson	Bruno Mathsson	Stevenson Davies Pty Ltd, Clayton, VIC

Glass

Denmark	Kastrup-Holmegaards	Christer Holmgren Per Lütken Grethe Meyer & Ibi Trier Mørch	Danfield Pty Ltd, Crows Nest, NSW
Finland	AB Wärtsilä Ab-Notsjoe Glass	Kaj Franck Oiva Toikka	Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Finland	Iittala Glassworks	Alvar Aalto Timo Sarpaneva Tapio Wirkkala	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Norway	Hadelands Glassverk	Severin Brørby Willy Johansson Arne Jon Jutrem	Lee, Monteith & Biggs Pty Ltd, Brisbane, QLD; Sydney, NSW; Melbourne, VIC
Norway	Norway Designs	Richard Duborgh	John Clare, Norway Designs, South Perth, WA
Norway	Randsfjord Glassverk	Benny Motzfeldt	
Sweden	AB Åfors Glasbruk	Bertil Vallien	
Sweden	AB Kosta Glasbruk	Monica Morales Schildt Rolf Sinnemark Ann & Göran Wärff	
Sweden	AB Orrefors Glasbruk	Gunnar Cyrén Nils Landberg Ingeborg Lundin Sven Palmqvist	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Sweden	Boda Bruks AB	Monica Backström Erik Höglund Signe Persson-Melin	The Glass Import Co of Australia, Sydney, NSW

Jewellery, silver and enamel

Denmark	A Michelsen A/S	Ole Hagen Inger Hanman Erik Herløw Ibi Trier Mørch	
Denmark	Carl M Cohrs Sølvvarefabriker A/S	Hans Bunde Hjørdis Haugaard	JD Milner Pty Ltd, Perth, WA KWL's Import, Potts Point, NSW

Denmark	Den Permanente	Palle Bisgaard Helga & Bent Exner Anni & Bent Knudsen	Unik Import, Double Bay, NSW Vasa Agencies, Sydney, NSW
Denmark	Georg Jensen Sølvsmiede A/S	Rigmor Andersen & Annelise Bjørner Ibe Dahlquist Nanna Ditzel Søren Georg Jensen Henning Koppel Magnus Stephensen	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Denmark	Hans Hansens Sølvsmiede A/S	Karl Gustav Hansen Bent Gabrielsen Pedersen	
Denmark	Kay Bojesen Silver	Kay Bojesen	Whitelaw & Co, Melbourne, VIC Forum Pty Ltd, Melbourne, VIC
Finland	Kalevala Koru Oy	Paula Häiväoja	
Finland	Kruunu-Koru Oy	Björn Weckström	
Norway	A/S Cathrineholm	Arne & Grete Korsmo	
Norway	Bjørn Engø Enamel Workshop	Bjørn Engø	
Norway	Emalox A/S		
Norway	JA Tostrup A/S	Grete Prytz Korsmo Gine Sommerfelt	
Norway	Regine & Frank Juhls Silver Workshop	Regine & Frank Juhls	
Norway	Tone Vigeland Silver Workshop	Tone Vigeland	
Sweden	Birger Haglund Silver Workshop	Birger Haglund	
Sweden	Carl Gustav Jahnsson Silver Workshop	Carl Gustav Jahnsson	
Sweden	Sigurd Persson Silver Workshop	Sigurd Persson	

Lighting fixtures

Denmark	Louis Poulsen & Co A/S	Poul Henningsen Verner Panton Louis Poulsen & Co A/S	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Finland	Oy Stockmann Ab – Orno	Lisa Johansson-Pape	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW

Norway	Jac Jacobsen A/S		Luxolamp of Australia Pty Ltd, Crows Nest, NSW
Norway	Kjell Bjelland		
Sweden	Ateljé Lyktan AB	Anders Pehrson	

Metal

Denmark	A Michelsen A/S	Arne Jacobsen	
Denmark	A/S Stelton	Arne Jacobsen	C Bell & Son, Melbourne, VIC
Denmark	Dansk Elektroindustri Ltd	Aage Hansen Dansk Elektroindustri Ltd	
Denmark	Georg Jensen Sølvsmide A/S	Henning Koppel Svend Siune	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Denmark	Universal Steel Company A/S	Erik Herløw & Tormod Olesen	Danish Design Agency, Melbourne, VIC
Finland	Kymmene Aktiebolag	Antti Nurmesniemi	
Finland	Oy Wärtsilä Ab-Helsinki Works	Kaj Franck Seppo Mallat Harry Moilanen Antti Nurmesniemi	Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Norway	Brødrene Øyo	Roy Blom	
Norway	Industriaktieselskapet Mjøln		Karmel Bros, Northcote, VIC
Norway	Nordisk Aluminiumsindustri A/S	Oscar Sørensen Tias Eckhoff	Little & Westaway Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Norway	Norsk Stålpres A/S	Tias Eckhoff	Lee, Monteith & Biggs Pty Ltd, Brisbane, QLD
Norway	Polaris Fabrikker	Herman Bongaard Morris Reme Sveinung Schanche Olsen	Allen's Sweets Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW; Ralph V Dearnaley Pty Ltd, Brisbane, QLD; Campbell Ryan & Co Pty Ltd, Perth, WA; Karmel Bros, Northcote, VIC
Sweden	AB Gense GAB	Folke Arström Pierre Forssell Sven Arne Gillgren	Harland L Hogan & Son, Sydney, NSW
Sweden	Sandvikens Jernverks AB		Sandvik Australia Pty Ltd, Smithfield, NSW

Miscellaneous products

Denmark	Kay Bojesen Models	Kay Bojesen	Creative Toys, Taringa, QLD
Denmark	Laur. Knudsen Ltd	Henning Andreasen Laur. Knudsen Ltd	Metric Pty Ltd, Perth, WA RE Jeffries Pty Ltd, Artarmon, NSW
Denmark	Modulex A/S		
Denmark	Ole Palsby	Nils Fagerholt	
Norway	Norway designs	Herman Bongard	John Clare, Norway Designs, South Perth, WA
Norway	Rachel Weyergang Wood Workshop	Rachel Weyergang	
Norway	Siemens Norge A/S	Birger Dahl	
Norway	Tandbergs Radiofabrik A/S		Simon Gray Pty Ltd, Melbourne, VIC
Sweden	Gösta Israelsson Wood Workshop	Gösta Israelsson	
Sweden	Victor Hasselblad		Cinoptics Australia Pty Ltd, Artarmon, NSW

Plastics

Finland	Sanka Oy	Yki Nummi	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Denmark	Torben Ørskov & Co	Kristian Vedel	
Norway	Møreplast A/S		

Textiles

Canada	Helena Barynina Tapestries	Helena Barynina	
Denmark	Danish Handicraft Guild	Gerda Bengtsson Edith Hansen Ingrid Hansen	
Denmark	Gabriel Vejlevej	Tove Kindt-Larsen	Artifort Gabriel (Australia), Rushcutters Bay, NSW
Denmark	LF Foght Aktieselskab	Piet Hein Aase Kristensen LF Foght Aktieselskab	
Denmark	Spindegården I/S	Paula Trock	

Denmark	Textil Lassen	Inge Ebert Erik Herløw & Tormod Olesen	
Denmark	Tuxwell	Ettie Tuxen	
Finland	Friends of Finnish Handicraft	Uhra-Beata Simberg-Ehrström	
Finland	Helmi Vuorelma Oy	Maija Kolsi-Mäkelä	
Finland	Marimekko Oy	Maija Isola Annika Piha	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Finland	Metsovaara Oy	Marjatta Metsovaara	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Finland	Neovius Oy	Terttu Tomero	Ken J Widdowson, Melbourne, VIC
Finland	Oy Barker-Littoinen	Kirsti Ilvessalo	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Finland	Oy Finlayson-Forssa Ab	Susanna Beloff Raili Lampela Leila Lehto Liisa Menander Ritva Teivaala	L Collins & Co, Sydney, NSW Arthur G Wilson, Sydney, NSW
Finland	Oy Finnrya Ab	Ritva Puotila	Finnish Importing Co. Northbridge, NSW
Finland	Oy Tampella Ab	Dora Jung	Incorporated Agencies Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW
Finland	Villayhtymä Oy	Aune Gummerus	
Finland	Vuokko	Vuokko Nurmesniemi	
Norway	Anne-Marie Kommissar Weaving Studio	Anne-Marie Kommissar	
Norway	Åse Frogner Weaving Studio	Åse Frogner	
Norway	Else Astrup-Våler	Else Astrup-Våler	John Clare, Norway Designs, South Perth, WA
Norway	Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik	Hans W Hosak	
Norway	Kristianevev	Kristi Skintveit	
Norway	Pettersens Vevstue		John Clare, Norway Designs, South Perth, WA

Sweden	AB Marks Jacquardväveri	Elsa Bruce Age Faith-Ell Ingrid Ekenberg & Nils Gröndahl Kerstin Hörlin-Holmquist	Design 250 Pty Ltd, Melbourne, VIC
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Appendix 3

Scandinavian objects acquired from the *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition in Australian public museum and art gallery collections

Art Gallery of Western Australia

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
Bowl glazed stoneware	A/S Herman A Kähler Denmark	Nils Kähler
Bowl glass	AB Kosta Glasbruk, Sweden	Ann and Göran Wärff
Dish (WU 355) glass	AB Kosta Glasbruk, Sweden	Ann and Göran Wärff
Ornament glass	AB Kosta Glasbruk, Sweden	Ann and Göran Wärff
<i>Fuga</i> bowl (9131/046) glass	AB Orrefors Glasbruk, Sweden	Sven Palmquist
Desk chair rosewood and leather	AJ Iversen Denmark	Ole Wanscher
Textile woven wool	Anne Marie Kommissar Weaving Studio Norway	Anne Marie Kommissar
<i>Gammal</i> wool ryijy rug	Friends of Finnish Handicraft, Finland	Uhra-Beata Simberg-Ehrström
Pitcher (VE 32) sterling silver	Georg Jensen Sølvsmide, Denmark	Henning Koppel
Dish (K 4021) glass	Hadelands Glassverk, Norway	Severin Brørby
Vase glass	Hadelands Glassverk, Norway	Severin Brørby
<i>Marmora</i> vase glass	Iittala Glassworks, Finland	Tapio Wirkkala
Vase (M 41-400) glass	Iittala Glassworks, Finland	Timo Sarpaneva
<i>Harlekiini</i> (35) printed cotton	Metsovaara Oy Finland	Marjatta Metsovaara
<i>Havuhippa</i> ryijy rug	Neovius Oy	Terttu Tomero
<i>Ambiente</i> curtains (4199/872 & 4199/810) printed cotton sateen	Oy Tampella Ab	Dora Jung
Tablecloth (578) woven linen	Oy Tampella Ab Finland	Dora Jung

Shallow bowl (117) glazed earthenware	Oy Wärtsilä Ab-Arabia Finland	Friedl Kjellberg
Two candle holders (415 short & 415 tall)	Oy Wartsila Ab-Notsjoe Glass, Finland	Oiva Toikka
Woven textile wool	Spindegården I/S	Paula Trock
Chair pine	Trybo A/S	Edwin Helseth
Armchair (2842/L) teak and leather	Willy Beck Denmark	Ejner Larsen and Axel Bender Madsen

Queensland Art Gallery

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
Stool wood and linoleum	Artek Oy Ab Finland	Alvar Aalto
<i>T-102 Easy Chair</i> wood with hemp webbing	Firma Karl Mathsson Sweden	Bruno Mathsson
Bowl wood	Gösta Israelsson Wood Workshop	Gösta Israelsson
Bowl glass	Hadelands Glassverk Norway	Severin Brørby
<i>Multe</i> bowl glass	Hadelands Glassverk Norway	Severin Brørby
Vase glass	Hadelands Glassverk Norway	Severin Brørby
<i>Luxo lamp 1001</i> (LFM-1)	Jac. Jacobsen A/S Norway	
Bowl (B 181-63) glass	Orrefors Glasbruk Sweden	
Vase (D-22/57) glass	Orrefors Glasbruk Sweden	
2 bowls glass	Randsfjords Glassverk Norway	Benny Motzfeldt

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
<i>Kongsvoll</i> decanter glass	Hadelands Glassverk Norway	Severin Brørby
2 <i>Opland</i> decanters glass	Hadelands Glassverk Norway	Severin Brørby

Australian National University

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
<i>Sun</i> wallhanging beaded linen	Selskabet til Haandarbejdets Fremme (Danish Handcraft Guild) Denmark	Edith Hansen

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
<i>T-501</i> Table wood	Firma Karl Mathsson Sweden	Bruno Mathsson
Block crystal (PA 204-61) glass	Orrefors Glasbruk Sweden	Sven Palmquist
Pot glazed stoneware	Saxbo-Stentøj Denmark	Nathalie Krebs and Eva Staehr-Nielsen

National Gallery of Victoria

Object/materials	Manufacturer	Designer
Vase glazed stoneware This work proposed for acquisition but not accepted by the NGV. It was purchased by Kenneth Hood, from whose estate the NGV acquired the work in 2003.	Bertil Vallien Studio Pottery Sweden	Bertil Vallien
8-piece cutlery set sterling silver	Carl M Cohrs Sølvvarefabriker Denmark	Hjørdis Haugaard
Jug sterling silver	Carl M Cohrs Sølvvarefabriker Denmark	Hans Bunde

Tobacco jar sterling silver	Carl M Cohrs Sølvvarefabriker Denmark	Hans Bunde
Coffee pot sterling silver	Georg Jensen Sølvsmiede Denmark	Henning Koppel
Water pitcher sterling silver	Hans Hansen Sølvsmiede Denmark	Bent Gabrielsen Pedersen
<i>Sigma</i> tapestry woven wool	Helena Barynina Tapestries	Helena Barynina

**Appendix 4
Selected cultural, trade and commercial exhibitions of Scandinavian-designed objects in Australia 1921–2006**

Title	Dates	Locations	Venues	Organisers	Details
Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Sydney	From 1921 through 1930s	Sydney	Sample Room, Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Sydney	Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Sydney	The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Sydney maintained a Sample Room to display Swedish products
Orrefors Glass	12.1927	Sydney	Grosvenor Galleries		Exhibition of Orrefors glass
Treasures of the Home	1954	Melbourne	Melbourne Town Hall		Included modern Swedish glass from collection of architect, Robin Boyd
Danish Applied Arts and Crafts	1954	Sydney	The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales, King St, Sydney.	Arranged by Henning Hergol, Consul-General for Denmark, for The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales	Ref: Powerhouse: Pamphlet no 706.09944.HIS.: <i>Historical Sketch of The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW. Part II 1931-1956.</i> p 14: 'The Highlight of the Annual Exhibition this year was a delightful loan of Danish Applied Arts and Crafts kindly arranged by Mr. H. Hergol, Consul-General for Denmark. (Opened by Dr H. Wynham, Director-General of Education in NSW)
Sweden in Australia	May 1954	Sydney	David Jones department store	Organised under the auspices of The General Export Association of Sweden by Svenska Slöjdföreningen, and designed by Anders Beckman, designer of Swedish exhibit at 1939 New York World's Fair.	Promotional display of Swedish products

The Swedish Floating Fair	1961	Australian ports	m.v.Kirribilli	The General Export Association of Sweden and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Sydney	Floating trade fair of Swedish products on board the m.v. <i>Kirribilli</i> , organised by the General Export Association of Sweden, in cooperation with the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Sydney
Swedish Boda exhibition	3.1961	Sydney	David Jones department store	Kosta Boda, Sweden and David Jones	Commercial exhibition of Kosta Boda glass by Eric Höglund
Design for Living	March 1962 (NGV)	Melbourne Sydney Brisbane Perth Adelaide Hobart	National Gallery of Victoria and touring to all State art galleries	National Gallery of Victoria and Council of Adult Education and the Education Department of Victoria.	Exhibition of international design from 12 countries, including section on Scandinavia design with 25 objects from the 80 products included in exhibition.. Catalogue had introductions from NGV Director, Eric Westbrook and Colin Barrie, Director of Industrial Design Council of Australia
Suomi 1963: Finnish Exhibition	24.9-5.10.1963	Sydney	Scandinavia House	Axel Rappe, Scandinavia House	Commercial exhibition of contemporary Finnish design in furniture, ceramics, glass, metal, lighting, wallpaper, toys and textiles
Design in Scandinavia	15.2-10.3.1968 28.3-9.4.1968 9.5-10.6.1968 3.7-28.7.1968 22.8-15.9.1968 4.10-10.11.1968 4.12-5.1.1969	Perth Adelaide Brisbane Sydney Hobart Melbourne Canberra	Art Gallery of Western Australia David Jones Queensland Art Gallery Art Gallery of New South Wales Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery National Gallery of Victoria Garran Hall, Australian National University	Directors of the State Galleries and the Commonwealth of Australia in conjunction with the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design, the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, the Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and industrial Design and the Swedish Society for Industrial Design. Secretary General: Ulla Tarras-Wahlberg, exhibition designer; Antti Nurmesniemi.	Travelling exhibition of Scandinavian applied arts and industrial design from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden

Design and Craft from Finland	1968	Adelaide Perth Melbourne Hobart	Design Centre David Foulkes Taylor Buckley's Newton James	Raoul Bauldich, Incorporated Agencies	Commercial exhibition of Finnish studio crafts.
The Boda Group – Exhibition of Contemporary Swedish Glassware	1968	Sydney	David Jones department store	Kosta Boda and David Jones	Featured works and visit by Bertil Vallien; works by Vicke Lindstrand, Ann and Göran Wärff, Monica Backstrom and Mona Morales-Schildt.
Gunnar Cyrén	1969	Sydney	David Jones' Orrefors Shop	David Jones and Orrefors	Works by Orrefors designer, Gunnar Cyrén.
Tor Schwank Jewellery	26.11–4.12.1971	Melbourne	Strines Gallery	Tor Schwank and Strines Gallery	Jeweller's commercial exhibition.
Architecture in Finland	25.1–25.2.1972 22.3–22.4.1972 10.5–10.6.1972 5.7–2.8.1972 23.8–23.9.1972 18.10– 18.11.1972 8.12.1972– 8.1.1973 22.1–27.2.1973	Mildura Canberra Melbourne Launceston Hobart Sydney Perth Brisbane	Mildura Arts Centre Art Gallery of Western Australia	Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki. Exhibition architect: Paavo Mänttari. Brought to Australia by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.	Exhibition included photographs, models, drawings, plans and furniture (including examples for use as public seating), lamps, glass and textiles designed by Alvar Aalto. Australian architect, Harry Seidler, wrote the catalogue essay.
Scandinavian Saga	4.1972	Sydney	David Jones department store		Commercial exhibition of Scandinavian products.

<p>Henning Koppel</p>	<p>5.7-4.8.1973 27.8-29.9.1973 17.10- 19.11.1973 23.10- 26.10.1973 23.1-25.2.1974 5.12.1973-</p>	<p>Perth Melbourne Sydney Mildura Newcastle Geelong Sale Benalla</p>	<p>Art Gallery of WA Georges Centrepoint Mildura Arts Centre Newcastle City Art Gallery Geelong Art Gallery Sale Regional Art Gallery Benalla Art Gallery</p>	<p>Organised by the Museum of Decorative Art (Det Danske Kunstinstrimuseum) Copenhagen and Georg Jensen Sølvsmide, Denmark, for one- year tour in association with Harland L Hogan</p>	<p>Travelling exhibition to celebrate 25 years of Henning Koppel designing for Georg Jensen. First shown at the Kunstindustrimuseet, Copenhagen (11.1971), Goldsmiths Hall, London (27.2-8.3.1972) and Düsseldorf (3-12.5.1971). Contents: 350 items of Georg Jensen silver 40 items of Georg Jensen design Bing & Grøndahl porcelain Louis Poulsen lamps 15 Form & Farve plastic wares 6 Koppel working drawings</p>
<p>Jewellery by I & V Hemmingsen</p>	<p>6-29.9.1973</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>Lord of the Rings artist- craftsmen jewellery gallery, Paddington</p>	<p>Ingemarie and Vagn Hemmingsen and Lord of the Rings director, Mike Aisenberg,</p>	<p>Commercial exhibition of 2 Danish silversmiths resident in Sydney.</p>
<p>This is Denmark</p>	<p>12.11.1973</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>David Jones department store</p>	<p>David Jones</p>	<p>Commercial exhibition, part of <i>The Great Danes</i> festival, following the opening of the Sydney Opera House on 20.10.1973. Products by Holmegaard (glass), Bing & Grøndahl (ceramic), Stelton (metalware), Hans Hansen (jewellery), Rosti (plastics), Michelsen (ceramics), Lego (building blocks), Peter F. Heering (liquor), Lundtoffe (metalware), Copco (cookware), Frigast (cutlery), Design U (plastics), Royal Copenhagen (ceramics), Dyrlund (furniture), Ege-Rya (rugs).</p>

Adventure in Swedish Glass	7.2-23.3.1975	Perth	Art Gallery of Western Australia (for 1975 Festival of Perth)	Organised by Svenska Slöjdföreningen (Swedish Society for Industrial Design) for Australian Gallery Directors' Conference, with assistance from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council. (Commissioner: Lennart Lindkvist) and toured in Australia through the Australian Gallery Directors' Conference 1975.	Travelling exhibition of contemporary glass from Kosta Boda and Orrefors companies. Included glass works by 16 artists from Kosta-Boda and Orrefors: Olle Albertus, Monica Backström, Lisa Bauer, Eva Englund, Carl Fagerlund, Lars Hellsten, Paul Hoff, Ulrica Hydman-Vallien, Jan Johansson, Henning Koppel, Sigurd Persson, Signe Persson-Melin, Rolf Sinnemark, Bertil Vallien, Ann Wärf, Göran Wärf.
50 Years of Orrefors at David Jones	1977	Sydney	David Jones department store	Orrefors and David Jones	Commercial display of historical and contemporary designs for Orrefors.
George Jensen 75 Years	13.10.1978 23-27.10.1978	Sydney Hobart Melbourne Adelaide Perth	Georg Jensen, Centrepoint	Georg Jensen	Travelling commercial exhibition, including historic works. Principal Georg Jensen silversmith, Carsten Schack von Brockdorff, travelled with the exhibition, demonstrating in Sydney.
Swedish Week	30.3-3.4.1981	Sydney	Centrepoint	Swedish Trade Office, Swedish Export Council and Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Sydney	72 exhibitors and six special Swedish displays. Opened by Swedish King Karl Gustav on 31.3.1981.
Designed in Finland	9.7-1.8.1982	Perth Brisbane	Art Gallery of Western Australia Queensland Art Gallery	Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finnish Society of Craft and Design and Embassy of Finland	International touring exhibition (also titled <i>Finland Designs</i>)
Poul Andersen	12-21.10.1983	Sydney.	Georg Jensen Silver, Centrepoint	Georg Jensen Silver	Works by Georg Jensen designer, Poul Andersen.

Design in Sweden Now	1986	Sydney	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences' Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney	Swedish Society of Crafts and Design	Travelling exhibition of contemporary Swedish design
The Finnish Design Interface	11.6.1983	Launceston	Design Centre of Tasmania	Design Centre of Tasmania	Exhibition of the work of 10 Finnish designers staged on the occasion of the lecture visit to Tasmania of Tapio Peräinen, Managing Director of the Finnish Society for Craft and Design.
Scandinavian Crafts and Design	6-12.7.1987	Perth	Art Gallery of Western Australia	Art Gallery of Western Australia Curator: Robert Bell, Curator of Craft and Design	Exhibition of 60 objects from AGWA collection. It focused on the Gallery's collection of Scandinavian-designed and made objects, many of which had been acquired from the 1968 <i>Design in Scandinavia</i> exhibition. This was the first time that the Gallery's collection of Scandinavian-designed objects had been displayed together.
Danish Decorative Arts	3.2.1987	Melbourne	National Gallery of Victoria	Curator: Daniel McOwan	Exhibition from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, plus loans. Exhibition commemorated the visit of Danish Queen Margrethe II to Melbourne.
Georg Jensen: 10 Artists	30.5-16.6.1990	Sydney	Georg Jensen Silver, Centrepoin	Georg Jensen	Commercial exhibition of works by Georg Jensen designers: Henning Koppel, Ole Kortzau, Lene Munthe, Andreas Mikkelsen, Georg Jensen, Johan Rohde, Harald Neilsen, Sigvard Bernadotte, Vivianna Torun Bulow-Hube, Alev Siesbye.

Kosta Boda: 8 individuals	1991	Perth	Orrefors Kosta Boda, Claremont	Orrefors Kosta Boda	Commercial exhibition of Orrefors/Kosta Boda designers: Monica Backström, Anna Ehrner, Kjell Engman, Ulrica Hydman-Vallien, Gunnel Sahlin, Bertil Vallien, Ann Wåhström and Göran Wärff.
Ulla Viotti ceramics	9. 1991	Crows Nest, NSW	Australian Art Link Gallery	Australian Art Link and Ulla Viotti	Commercial exhibition of works produced in Australia by visiting Swedish ceramicist, Ulla Viotti.
Danish Art in Australia	11-31.7.1992 3-31.8.1992 4.9-4.10.1992 7.10-5.11.1992 10.11-8.12.1992	Mornington Shepparton Geelong Horsham Hamilton	Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre Shepparton Art Gallery Geelong Art Gallery Horsham Art Gallery Hamilton Art Gallery	Hamilton Art Gallery and Danish Australian Cultural Society. Curators: Daniel McOwan, Finn Aitken Petersen and Lindsay Anderson	Exhibition arranged to celebrate 10th anniversary of the Danish Australian Cultural Society in Melbourne.
Jewellery Through the Ages 1904-1992	5.5.1992	Sydney	Georg Jensen, Centrepoint	Georg Jensen	Exhibition of historical Danish silver from Georg Jensen company collection.
Art Glass by Eva Englund and Göran Wärff	2-21.9.1993	Hobart	Despard Gallery	Despard Gallery and Eva Englund and Goran Wärff	Commercial exhibition
Lin Utzon	8-23.12.1993	Sydney	Anibou	Anibou and Lin Utzon	Porcelain works made by Lin Utzon at Royal Copenhagen porcelain factory.
150 Years of Danish Glass	199?	Melbourne	Caulfield Institute of Technology	Organised by Bent Mansson and circulated in Victoria by Caulfield Institute of Technology.	Featuring Kastrup and Holmegaard glass.

Kähler Pottery: 1900–1920 Period	5.6–2.7.1994	Melbourne	Hurnall's	Hurnall's Antiques and Decorative Arts	Commercial exhibition of 70 historic Kähler ceramic works from a private collection.
Alvar Aalto: Points of Contact	21.4–2.6.1995	Perth	Cullity Gallery, University of Western Australia	Alvar Aalto Museum and Finnish Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education. Curator: Markku Lahti, Director Alvar Aalto Museum	Exhibition covering the career of Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto, through photographs, plans and models of his buildings, and examples of his furniture, lighting, textile and glass designs.
Bertil Vallien glass	4.1996	Sydney	Ken Done Art Gallery	Ken Done Art Gallery and Orrefors Kosta Boda	Commercial exhibition of Swedish glass artist, Bertil Vallien.
Nature as Object: Craft and design from Japan, Finland and Australia (3rd Australian International Crafts Triennial)	2.7–6.9.1998	Perth	Art Gallery of Western Australia	Art Gallery of Western Australia. Curator: Robert Bell, Curator of Craft and Design.	This exhibition included contemporary craft works from fifteen Australian artists, ten Japanese artists and twelve Finnish artists: Pekka Paikkari, Agneta Hobin, Ritva Puotila, Ulla-Maija Vikman, Maija Lavonen, Olli Tamminen, Janna Syvänoja, Kristina Riska, Kerftu Nurminen, Markku Kosonen, Tuula Falk and Fujiwo Ishimoto. 22 works from the exhibition were acquired for the Art Gallery of Western Australia's collection, including works by Finnish artists, Ishimoto, Kosonen, Nurminen, Puotila, Syvänoja and Vikman.
The Danish wave: Contemporary Danish Architecture and Design	29.5–11.7.1999 24.7–27.8.1999 23.10–	Adelaide Perth Melbourne Sydney	JamFactory Cullity Gallery, University of Western Australia RMIT University Gallery Old Customs House	Danish Ministry of Culture and toured through the auspices of the Danish Embassy, Canberra	Travelling exhibition of Danish products and architecture that included the work of contemporary Danish architects and industrial designers.

Baltic Nouveau: Craft and Design 1890–1910	22.4–9.7.2000	Perth	Art Gallery of Western Australia	Curator; Robert Bell, Curator of Craft and Design	This exhibition from the Gallery's collection of historic Scandinavian craft and design included Swedish and Danish decorative arts and used them to illustrate the Nordic interpretation of the late 19th and early 20th century styles of Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Arts and Crafts and National Romanticism.
Modern Swedish and Swedish Modern	17–28.11.1999	Sydney	Funkis & Möbler		Commercial exhibition
Anu Penttinen: Mono	9–20.7.2000	Canberra	Beaver Galleries	Anu Penttinen and Beaver Galleries	Commercial exhibition of glass works made in Canberra by Finnish artist Anu Penttinen.
Danish Classic Moderne	16.9–02.10.2000 15–30.10.2000	Sydney Melbourne	Michael Commerford Gallery	Danish Classic Moderne, Melbourne	Commercial exhibition of historic furniture, glass and ceramics.
Design for Every Body	14.10–3.12.2000	Sydney	Object Galleries	Svensk Form (The Swedish Society of Crafts and Design). Curators: Christina Nilson-Dag and Pernilla Åbrink	Travelling exhibition of design for the disabled, as part of Paralympics Arts Festival to coincide with the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney. It focused on design for the disabled, displaying a variety of practical appliances in unconventional forms and colours far removed from the hospital-like equipment that is usually available for use by the disabled.
Danish Furniture	28–30.11.2000	Sydney	Sydney Opera House	Association of Danish Furniture Industries, Royal Danish Consulate General, Sydney and Bromhead Design	Commercial trade exhibition.

Danish Design	17-28.10.2000	Sydney	Volvo Gallery	Bromhead Design	Commercial trade exhibition Furniture by Hans Wegner, Rud Thygesen and Johnny Sørensen, Poul Kjaerholm, Søren Petersen; lighting by Erik Magnussen, Jørgen Gammelgaard, Hans Wegner; audio visual equipment by Bang & Olufsen.
Finnish Design 125	8-18.8.2002 26.10-6.12.2002 2003 2003	Sydney Launceston Brisbane Perth	Object Galleries Design Centre of Tasmania Brisbane City Art Gallery Form	Design Forum Finland, Helsinki	Travelling exhibition of the work of Finnish designers, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design.
Norwegian Contemporary Glass	20.6-13.7.2003 2003	Canberra Sydney Perth	ANU Drill Hall Gallery Glass Artists Gallery Craftwest	Embassy of Norway	Travelling exhibition of contemporary Norwegian glass
Design in Finland	28.5-6.7.2003	Hamilton	Hamilton Art Gallery	Hamilton Art Gallery. Curator: Daniel McOwan	Textiles, glass, metal and ceramics from Hamilton Art Gallery collection & others
Fabulous Finland	17-26.9.2003	Canberra	Embassy of Finland	Anibou, Sydney	Commercial trade exhibition
Kool: Scandinavian style meets West Australian design	13.9.2003- 22.3.2004	Perth	Art Gallery of Western Australia	Art Gallery of Western Australia. Curator: Melissa Harpley	Exhibition from the Gallery's collection of Scandinavian and Western Australian designers' work to examine the influence of Scandinavian design on local practice, particularly on the work of David Foulkes Taylor and his circle.

<p>4Stories</p>	<p>11–14.3.2005 18–23.3.2005</p>	<p>Melbourne Sydney</p>	<p>Federation Square Atrium, Melbourne Australian National Maritime Museum, Terrace Room, Sydney</p>	<p>Swedish Embassy in Canberra, HE Karin Ehnbohm-Palmquist, Chair Swedish Style Australia Advisory Group. Curated and designed by Monica Förster and Nina Jobs</p>	<p>Part of <i>Swedish Style Australia</i>, promotion of Swedish design and culture. Launched in Melbourne on 10.3.2005 by HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Patron of project. Included a seminar in Melbourne (11.3.2005) and Sydney (21.3.2005), <i>Swedish Perspectives on Design</i>, with speakers: Ann-Charlotte Ripa, Eero Koivisto, Steve Trygg, Bjorn Reitz, Anders Breitholtz, Efva Attling and Thomas Sandell (Melbourne only).</p>
<p>Art with a Finnish connection</p>	<p>22–29.4.2005</p>	<p>Canberra</p>	<p>Embassy of Finland, Yarralumla, ACT</p>	<p>Embassy of Finland. Organised by Dr Hannu Märkälä.</p>	<p>4 artists with Finnish connections: Hannu Märkälä (sculptor), Karl-Julius Mattas (painter), Kai Hagberg (jeweler, sculptor, printmaker), Didi La Baysse (painter, textile designer).</p>
<p>Transformations: the language of craft</p>	<p>11.11.2005– 29.1.2006</p>	<p>Canberra</p>	<p>National Gallery of Australia</p>	<p>National Gallery of Australia. Curator: Robert Bell, Senior Curator Decorative Arts and Design</p>	<p>Survey exhibition of craft works from 85 artists, including Agneta Hobin (textiles, Finland), Kristina Riska (ceramics, Finland), Tone Vigeland (jewellery, Norway), Bodil Manz (ceramics, Denmark), Hobin, Vigeland and Manz works acquired for NGA collection.</p>