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Happy returns

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HAPPY RETURNS

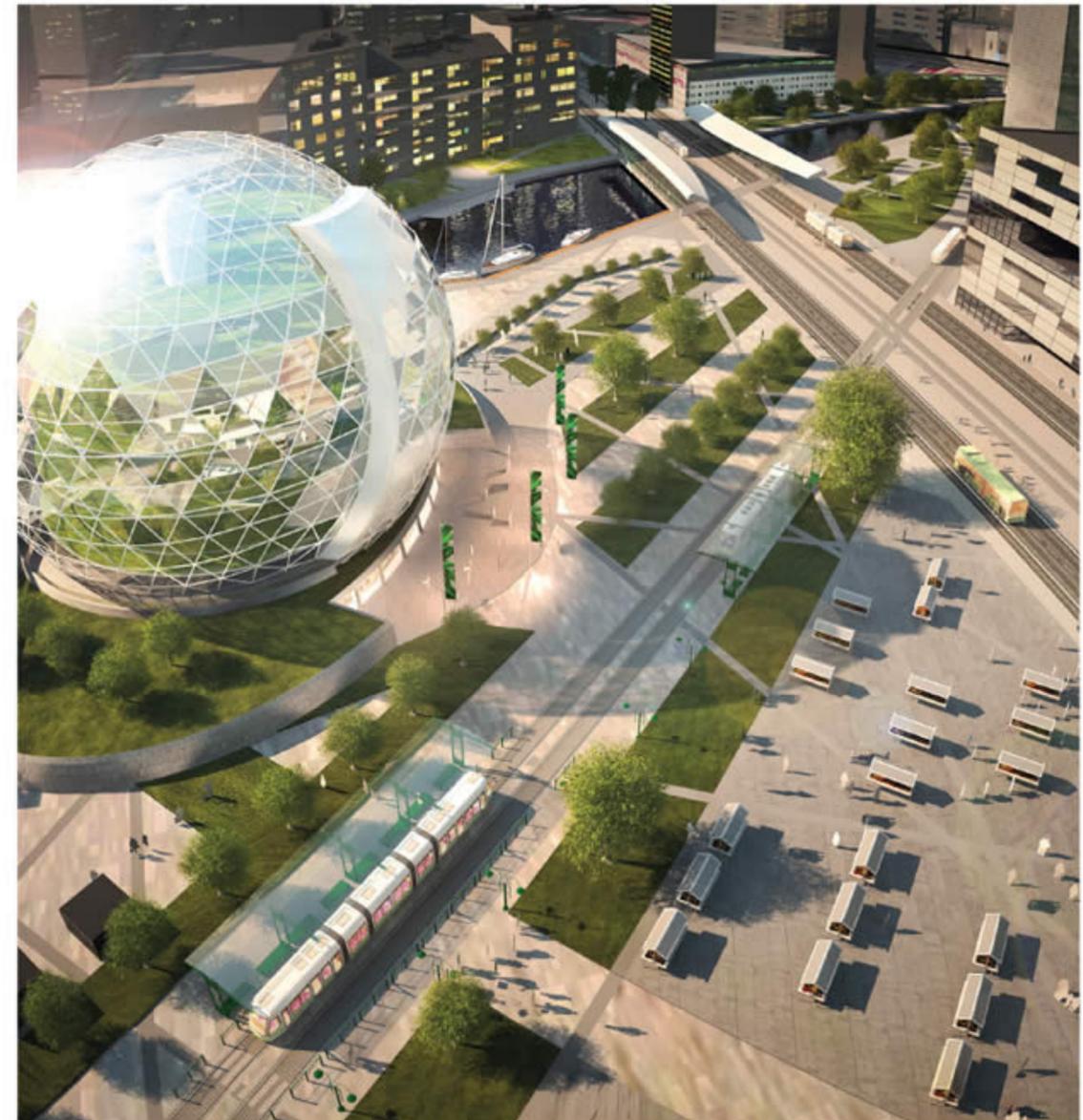


ABOVE URBANEARS ZINKEN HEADPHONES

The history of Swedish design is replete with world-beating innovations, which makes this year's Business of Design Week especially attractive. With Sweden as its partner country, the event is guaranteed to bring some of the world's most fascinating designers to Hong Kong. AMANDA SHUAI reports.

When confronted with one of life's daily obstacles a sensible Swedish solution is never far away: IKEA products can transform a bare apartment into a stylish home without breaking the bank, quality fast fashion is at your fingertips with the High Street brand H&M; Electrolux produce anything you could ever want for your kitchen and Candy Crush Saga is always at hand for whiling away idle minutes with blissful gaming.

IMAGES FROM BELOW



ABOVE RENDERING OF A VERTICAL URBAN FARM BY PLANTAGON

Swedish design is discernable by its utilitarian simplicity – it boasts a serenely stylish functionality. At this year's Business of Design Week (BoDW) the brains behind these big Swedish brands will share their knowledge with the design community of Hong Kong, immersing the city in new insights and perspectives from one of the most innovative countries in the world.

"Since its inception in 2002, BoDW is the platform for knowledge exchanges and it is set to be the leading annual design

programme in Asia," says Elaine Chow, director of Programme of BoDW 2014.

"Culture, in a broader sense, is the DNA of their everyday life," says Chow who believes that Swedish designers are born solution providers and that innovation is their tool to tackle challenges and explore new possibilities.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the bilateral design partnership, BoDW has asked Sweden to return for the weeklong annual design conference. "We are honoured to have Sweden return as our partner country



« WE ARE HONOURED TO HAVE SWEDEN RETURN AS OUR PARTNER COUNTRY AGAIN FOR BODW 2014 AFTER THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE 10 YEARS AGO »

ELAINE CHOW

TOP: SCANIA R-SERIES TRUCK
ABOVE: CLOCK CABINET FROM IKEA PS-COLLECTION
OPPOSITE: RESTAURANT AND BAR CUCKOO'S NEST DESIGNED BY STYLLTRAMPOLI

again for BoDW 2014 after their first appearance 10 years ago," says Chow.

From December 1 to 6 design minds will gather together under the leitmotif "Living Design: Live It, Work It, Wear It, Do It". BoDW has invited more than 20 Swedish speakers from worldwide brands, designers, innovators, creators, architects and leading entrepreneurs of the day, assembling a dream team of design masterminds.

"I hope that BoDW can serve as a platform for our Hong Kong design

practitioners," says Chow. "With these prominent Swedish business leaders, designers and innovators available to exchange insights we can resolve the challenges ahead and create business opportunities by leveraging the latest creative ideas and innovations."

Swedish design owes a lot to the Scandinavian style (often referred to as democratic design) that emerged during the vacuum left after the Second World War. As Europe struggled to rebuild itself after the ravages of conflict an appealing, accessible and affordable design style flourished. Taking advantage of low cost materials and



the availability of mass-production, designers created beautiful products that people needed. Pressed wood and steel, glass and plastics are the language in which Swedish Design is still written.

Featuring the striking yellow and blue of the nation's flag, the bold lettering of IKEA is a prominent signpost to Swedish design in Hong Kong. IKEA brings functional vibrancy to the compact homes of Hong Kong residents. With fluid lines and intriguing shapes the simple designs that optimise space are a supreme match for the city's limitations and the local aesthetic.

Sustainability has emerged as a core element in Swedish design. Sweden ranks amongst the world's top consumers of renewable energy, and the country's government has shown considerable investment in eco technologies. With a green

mentality engrained in Swedish culture, designers seamlessly thread sustainability throughout their creations – organic cotton in H&M's apparel and IKEA's commitment to source 50% percent of its wood from sustainable sources by 2017 are just two examples.

By bringing the essence and the best of Swedish design to the region's design community, the 2014 edition of BoDW serves to emphasise how the week long design festival has become a valuable source of inspiration for Asian designers, adding value to their products as well as increasing their competitiveness in the world.

"We believe the Hong Kong design community can absorb the Swedish culture of innovation and apply it to their work and hence influence our peers in the Asia region," says Chow. ☺

IMAGES FROM BODW