

2014: A Review

So another year has passed! To close 2014, we asked Nico Yiannikou of Y2DC Ltd., Almas Shamsee of Maisha Design, Clare Pascoe, and Hugh Jamieson of At Home Interior Design Consultants to share their highlights.

What was the best exhibition you attended in 2014?

Clare: I went to designjunction, Tent and Superbrands. As with last year, Superbrands impressed me the most as although there are fewer exhibitors on larger stands, I found the quality of product to be very high and far more relevant to my client base. The Norway Exhibition was beautifully presented – lovely products and design ethos. ▼



Almas Shamsee





This 'Into the Woods' bookcase was loved by Almas



Hypetex, Nico's favourite find
(Halo chair designed by the Michael Sodeau Partnership)

▲ I was disappointed with designjunction because I found it heavily product focussed as the products had pride of place on the ground floor level. The lighting was a small dark area in the basement, and the furniture was upstairs giving the show a protracted feel; and while there were many beautiful products I was very disappointed with the lack of ergonomic consideration in the design of nearly all the chairs featured – all were too deep, with backs too low and a rake that throws you back into the seat, which with no head rest is very uncomfortable. That said, Couch Potato Company and the fabulous products from IO Kids Design were a highlight!

Tent last year was fabulous, but this year many exhibitors returned with very similar products so it was less inspirational. Plus it was uncomfortably hot, with exhibitors and visitors struggling so the organisers really need to address ventilation next year. I enjoyed the Japanese area, but found the mish-mash of sounds blaring out of many of the stands, all crammed together, very off-putting so we rushed through faster than we would have wished to otherwise.

At designjunction, I loved the transport-inspired café with upholstery from Kirkby Design that features designs from London tubes, trains and buses of old. Very nostalgic



Nico Yiannikou

yet refreshed in a modern palette; a very clever way to showcase a collection!

Nico: Following on from last year's shows, this year I was really looking forward to attending designjunction again. For me it's the most exciting show of the season. I love seeing all the new and creative products that are showcased. The venue itself and the way it's laid out is also very interesting.

I firmly believe that designjunction has become the leading destination show of the year. The space itself is so interesting; a former sorting office in central London. This lends itself to adapt to a form of cityscape for the show. Also included this year was the Basement which is solely dedicated to lighting and branded as lightjunction.

Overall it's a delight to wander around the show and experience the enthusiasm and professionalism of new and established designers/entrepreneurs in the heart of the city. ▼

▲ **Almas:** 2014 was a busy year with lots of great exhibitions and trade shows; they were all good in different ways and an essential part of the job. Decorex remains an all-time favourite as it's an opportunity to not only see new products from existing suppliers who continue to amaze us with innovations, but also to discover new brands on the domestic market.

I also, for the first time, attended Index in Dubai and it was fascinating to see a whole new range of products designed to suit a very different climate and style. It was particularly interesting to attend seminars and share stories with designers in a different part of the world.

Hugh: For me the best events were the London Design Festival and 100% Design. The London Design Festival has so much to offer, and I feel 100% Design has just got better and better. We usually find one or two new suppliers here and certainly renew contacts with existing suppliers. ▼



Hugh Jamieson



Top Brewer by Scanomat provided Hugh's caffeine fix!

▲ The exhibitors cover a good wide spectrum of our industry rather than just one section, so you come away feeling updated across the board. One of the new products we discovered at 100% Design and like is Scanomat's 'Coffee on an App.' We usually include designjunction, Chelsea Harbour Design Centre and the Lots Road area, as well as many other smaller venues, if time allows.

What was your favourite new product of 2014?

Almas: There are a couple of products that caught my eye in 2014. In particular, Portuguese brand Insidherland by JSB launched some beautiful pieces at 100% Design. Inspired by nature, the pieces combine beautiful wood finishes with a variety of metals. The end result is a product that is both organic and opulent in its feel.

I especially liked the 'Inspiring Trees' wall lamp in the brushed brass finish and can't wait for the opportunity to specify the 'Into The Woods' bookcase on a project!

Another exciting discovery was a bespoke furniture maker in Dubai. All hand-crafted using solid woods and sumptuous fabrics, they cater perfectly to the high-end luxury market and they are supplying a number of pieces for a high-end project we are working on in Bayswater. I am currently in talks with them about a possible collaboration to launch a furniture range in London ...watch this space!

Hugh: Scanomat's Top Brewer, the coffee tap with App! What a brilliant idea to have the coffee machine hidden out of the way, and there are plenty of options regarding coffee menu too – you can even make tea or hot chocolate ! Love it. This came about

with a commercial coffee supplier with the right machinery joining forces with an App to make it all controllable by remote.

Clare: My favourite new product had to be the plywood bunk bed designed by Mina Panic of IO Kids Design. Mina has created a design that parents will love, with super cool mid-century inspired styling in plywood, a product I love, and children will love its funky design, hidden storage and of course it's a much coveted bunk bed – I can see the design cleverly lasting into teenage years as it's that cool! Along with the bunk bed Mina has a range of desks and multi-use storage so if you're looking to kit out a cool kid's bedroom, look no further!

Nico: This year my favourite find was not a product as such more a material. It's from Hypetex, it's the world's first coloured carbon fibre. In the past we have looked at ▼



Clare's choice – bunk bed designed by Mina Panic of IO Kids Design



Clare Pascoe

▲ using carbon fibre to design furniture and sanitaryware but were always limited to one colour, (black). Now with the technology from Formula 1, carbon fibre is available in a vast array of colours. This will allow us as designers to use this incredibly strong yet light material in harmony with other colour schemes that will complete the overall setting.

What were your own highlights of 2014?

Hugh: A personal highlight for me was to start running again this year after well over ten years of not running, due to a knee injury. I had kept up the swimming and cycling but last month completed a sprint triathlon in which I was second in my age group – not bad for nearly 60!

Professional highlights have been various completed projects between Cambridge and Norfolk during the year – as they say, the best job is the one just completed. And another sea-side project involves bringing a 1970s single storey wreck up to date with a total re-organisation of the internal spaces, a side extension with lots of glass, underfloor heating, new bathrooms, re-landscaping and newly created roof terrace to make the most of the sea views. It's 95% finished now but still a little more work to get it to the stage to be photographed and featured.

Clare: I was really pleased to see more British designer/makers and eco products gracing the shows, some (but not all!) who are worth a specific mention are in the box-out at the end. Please do visit their websites and contact them regarding your projects many, if not all, will design bespoke items to suit. As designers we can support this burgeoning and sustainable talent to protect

the skills for the future, while including beautiful pieces in our designs for our clients. Win Win!

Nico: For me personally the highlight of the year was completing a project on the Greek island of Paros. Working on this villa, stunningly designed by award-winning architects DECA based in Athens, we collaborated to provide a sleek and luxurious villa which nestles in the hillsides. The client gave us a great deal of freedom on the project and thus allowed us to bring together an eclectic yet modern feel to this 20,000sq ft villa. The nature of the villa is such that the outside spaces need as much if not more consideration, as the client spends more time outside the villa than inside.

Almas: 2014 has been an exciting year for Maisha Design. We launched our new studio in Shad Thames, right next to Tower Bridge and a stone's throw away from the city where most of our clients work. We are also right in the heart of all the new development taking place around this exciting part of London. Having already completed a number of projects, we end the year working on a large lateral apartment in Bayswater, a large family home in Gerrards Cross, an office for 30 employees in London Bridge and an executive office in the More London development. Looking forward, we hope to spread our wings and have just taken on a villa in the south of France, due to be completed in April 2015.

On a more personal note, it was a significant year as I saw my business, now in its third year, really start to take off. Having left a career in the city and retrained to pursue my passion it is an amazing feeling to walk into a finished project and say 'I created this'!

Clare Pascoe's top picks from the shows:

designjunction: Greg Cox (British made furniture); Celebra (eco friendly disposable tableware at last, can festivals ditch white foam and plastic?); Hinton Work shop (mid-century inspired chairs but higher backs please!!); Qubis Design (have a very clever reversible dining table); Couch Potato Company (original reproduction mid-century furniture); Henry Swanzy (Cornish-made furniture); Deadgood (industrial inspired chairs made in Britain); Tom Raffield (the God of stunning British steamed bentwood lighting!) and student Laura McKay (Slope Desk & tidy blocks).

I was also very interested in the commercial style seating pods and acoustics, largely because we are moving across into the commercial arena, so I'm pleased to see a move towards striking design in this field showcasing at the event.

Tent & Superbrands: With less focus on British firms, these exhibitions showcased products from Europe and larger international firms. Those who impressed me include Peter Stern Furniture Design (really beautiful wooden furniture); Simon Lockwood (whose Eclipse Solar pendant is beautiful in its simplicity); Leander & Major (furniture made in the UK, but inspired by Scandinavian and mid-century design – perfect!); Situs (their Figure chair is beautiful); Vanguard Concept (stunning Portugese products designed and made in-house); Jake Phipps (who has a truly unique design style for show stopping pieces); Mater (beautiful, ethical furniture).