Artek’s new operations in the UK

Artek is expanding its sales operations in the UK. Last autumn, the company opened its new European headquarters, “Mondial Home”, in Berlin, and now it is time to expand in the British market.

An icon of modern design, Alvar Aalto’s three-legged Stool 60 celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. As one of the best-known design items in the world, Stool 60 is the quintessential piece of the Artek collection. In London, the anniversary year will kick off with the announcement of a new collaboration with its longtime partner, Skandium.

Artek strongly believes in growth in the consumer market. In order to be able to serve its new clientele and improve distribution, Artek will step up its cooperation with Skandium. From 1 March 2013, Skandium will be acting as Artek’s retail sales agent in the UK. The Artek operation featuring a showroom presentation will be based at the Skandium head office.

“The collaboration between Artek and Skandium has gained momentum as both companies are taking exciting steps forward. Artek is expanding internationally: its new headquarters in Berlin changed the balance and focus in Europe, Artek USA Inc. has found its form, the Asian and Scandinavian markets are growing fast, and now Artek will be viewing the design scene from the London perspective,” says Mirkku Kullberg, CEO of Artek.

“An international company with inspiring spirit and a profound understanding of Nordic design, Skandium has opened new stores in the most competitive and vibrant design markets, and has done it with style. There is a natural dialogue between Skandium and Artek,” Kullberg continues.

Artek has also extended its product portfolio with new designs and new collections. Presented now for the first time in the UK, Artek’s abc Collection signals the start of increasing activity in retail sales and a higher visibility for the Artek brand in the global market. The abc Collection consists of small objects that integrate naturally into the rest of Artek’s furniture collection; the title is a reference to the alphabet of living. In addition to classic design items by Alvar Aalto and Ilmari Tapiovaara, the Artek showroom at the Skandium Head Office has new furniture and lighting solutions on exhibit, such as the Kiki collection, the Lento Lounge Chair, Tapio Wirkkala’s TW002 pendant lamp, the Anniversary Edition of Stool 60 and new Special Editions of Stool 60 by Mike Meiré, Nao Tamura, Mads Nørgaard, Comme des Garçons, Monocle and Tom Dixon.

Skandium and its founders, Chrystina Schmidt and Magnus Englund, have profound knowledge and understanding of good design aesthetics. Their inspiring and authentic work as ambassadors of Nordic design has been acknowledged worldwide.
Artek is pleased to be able to strengthen its communications for sustainable design together with Schmidt and Englund. In addition to cooperation in sales, Chrystina Schmidt will also work as the curator of Artek’s abc Collection. Through her keen commercial sense, Schmidt’s uncompromising understanding of aesthetics and knowledge of materials further strengthen the development of Artek’s collection of small products.

The British market is extremely important for Artek. Even prior to the founding of the company, Alvar Aalto’s furniture was presented in 1933 in the Wood Only exhibition at Fortnum & Mason’s in London. The exhibition served as a springboard for the international success of Aalto’s furniture. The iconic Stool 60 was first introduced to the international public at the same exhibition. Finmar was founded in 1934 by the architect Philip Morton Shand and the engineer Geoffrey Boumphrey, in order to import Aalto’s furniture from Finland. Artek was founded in 1935. In the early years, Artek’s export operations were determined by the British market.

Artek
Artek was founded in 1935 by four young idealists, Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen and Nils-Gustav Hahl. Their business idea was “to sell furniture and promote a modern culture of habitation by exhibitions and other educational means.” In the radical spirit of its founders, Artek wishes to remain at the forefront of the search for future paths within and between the disciplines of design, architecture and art.

Artek remains one of the most innovative companies in contemporary design, with Artek STUDIO serving as its creative hub and design office. The cornerstones of Artek’s product development strategy are ethics, aesthetics and ecology, which translates into a combination of high quality with timeless, functional and sustainable design. The core of Artek’s product range consists of furniture and lamps designed by Alvar Aalto and the furniture collection of Ilmari Tapiovaara. Artek also continues to engage in significant collaboration with several international architects, designers and artists, such as Eero Aarnio, Shigeru Ban, Naoto Fukasawa, Harri Koskinen, Juha Leiviskä, Enzo Mari and Tobias Rehberger.

Skandium
Skandium is a British company, founded in 1999 by three Scandinavians. The aim is to be the best retailer of Scandinavian design & furniture in the world, giving customers a wide product choice while being served by knowledgeable staff in a well-presented environment. The family of stores in London consists of two Skandium stores, a Skandium concession in Selfridges department store, a Republic of Fritz Hansen store and an online store. Skandium also engages in wholesale to other retailers, contract sales for commercial projects and interior design for private clients.

Managing Director Magnus Englund was born in 1966 and grew up in the Swedish archipelago outside Stockholm. He has a background in fashion wholesale and retailing. He is the author of two best-selling books; Scandinavian Modern and Scandinavian Country. Creative Director Chrystina Schmidt is a Finnish national born to a German father and Swedish-speaking Finnish mother. Her childhood years were spent in Finland and Germany before she settled in Sweden in the 1980s. Schmidt worked previously as a fashion and lifestyle photographer with her own studio. She is a product and interior designer as well as the creative leader of the Skandium collection.
Further information
Laura Sarvilinna
Communication Manager/Global
laura.sarvilinna@artek.fi
TEL +358 40 519 54195

Jessica Jones
Press Officer/UK
jessica@skandium.com
TEL +44 (0)20 7823 8874