



Montana Free modular shelving system, designed in collaboration with Teklan. From €594.31, montanafurniture.com

COVER STORY

New Nordic style shows its colours

Stockholm Design Week is usually a sea of neutral interiors. This year, however, it was dominated by bold statement pieces. By *Katrina Burroughs*

Beautifully crafted classic chairs. World-class pendant lights. Clever shelving systems. Snow in the streets of Gamla Stan (the old town) and ice skating in Kungsträdgården. Stockholm Design Week never disappoints. And rarely surprises. Scandinavian style is a successful international brand. We love all the 20th-century design hits, adore the commitment to cosiness (think thick socks and scented candles) and applaud the calming palette of

natural timber and neutral hues. In this world, trends are treated with suspicion; change is glacial. This year, however, a group of influential colourists have defied the neutrals and created a New Nordic look based on strong hues and bold patterns. Let's begin with Tekla Severin, who shall be crowned our colour queen of design week. Also known as Teklan, the Swedish designer and photographer was behind three brilliant collaborations: for Montana, the Danish modular storage specialist; Johanson Design, a Swedish furniture manufacturer; and Layered, a Stockholm-based home decor brand.

Teklan sees the shift away from neutrals as a clear trend in Scandinavian design, particularly evident among the Danish labels. "I can see the influences partly coming from more vivid and personalised decorated home interiors in Copenhagen, and brands like Montana, Arne Aksel, and Hay, of course, with [Memphis Group designer] Nathalie du Pasquier's colour-blocking patterns," she says. "I think it's because it's more important to make a statement these days, to be real, authentic and to take social responsibility — and that needs deeper, stronger and bolder colours to communicate."

It was the same story at Arranging Things, the interior design practice, art and homeware hotspot in Stockholm's Hornsgatan street, where Camilla Iliefski's solo show, *Chroma*, featured vividly coloured hand-tufted tapestries in wool and linen. At Stockholm Furniture Fair, the trade event outside the city, Maria Gustavsson of Swedish Ninja showcased her own take on the New Nordic colour trend with the Candy lighting collection. At a nearby stand, in the zone for young designers, called New Ventures, was Gustaf Westman. New is a surprising word to describe Westman — though still in his twenties, he is well known and loved by many in the design community, with 351,000 Instagram followers. Since launching his studio in 2020, the architect-turned-designer has amassed a global fanbase for his brightly coloured small furniture, ceramics, glassware and mirrors. Westman, like Teklan, cites the Memphis Group as inspiration for his style, in particular Ettore Sottsass, the Italian architect and designer whose playful Ultrafragola illuminated mirror informed Westman's Curvy Mirror. If you want to see the New Nordic colour scheme in a real home, check out the eye-popping Instagram account of Cissi Ahlen, @mylifeinmulticolor. Ahlen manages the music library of Epidemic Sound, a company that provides royalty-free soundtracks. Her two-storey home, a 1950s semi-detached building near the



Gustaf Westman Flower Mirror Micro, €430, gustafwestman.com



▲ Crazy golf by Lab La Bla. The studio also showcased a new coating process that uses waste materials to revitalise old furniture. surfaceclub.eu



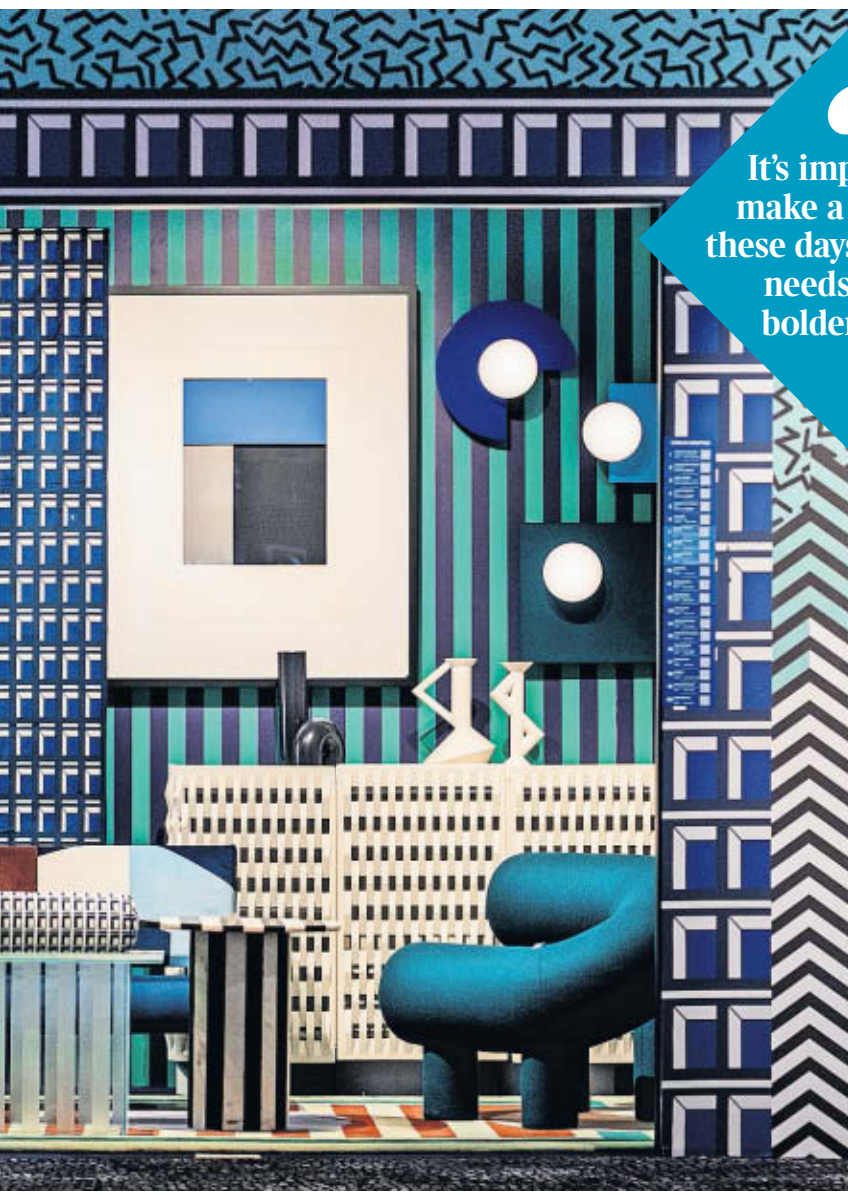
The Thread, a new seating collection by Farg & Blanche with cushions edged by a carpet stitching machine — available from April in the UK, starting at £763 (not including VAT) for the pouffe. johansondesign.com



◀ Fredrik Paulsen founded Joy Objects, which sells chairs, stools and side tables, from €350. The Swede created 33 new pieces in a collaboration with the auction house Bukowskis, joyobjects.com



► Relief system by String Furniture x TAF Studio. Chest of drawers from £1,410, hook rails from £76, stringfurniture.com



“It's important to make a statement these days — and that needs deeper, bolder colours”

centre of Stockholm, which she shares with her boyfriend Kristofer, their eight-year-old son, Cyril, and a parrotlet (a small species of parrot) called Zapp, is a symphony of colour. We're talking mid-century American diner meets Memphis Group, with a touch of acid house. "When we bought the house in 2016, the first wall I painted was pink, in the kitchen," Ahlen says. "Then we bought our fridge — that is buttercup yellow. When the pandemic hit, I was just staring at the walls." Using test pots, she started trying different colour combinations and paint effects all over the house. That was the beginning of her ever-changing homescape of many colours. She visits charity shops with her family every Saturday to scout for retro accessories. "I'm repainting all the time, and I'm adjusting, trying different things. If you don't like it, you can just paint over it." While Ahlen admits some would struggle to live with her decor, she is convinced her "Nordic dopamine interiors" support her wellbeing. "I was diagnosed with cancer when I was 24. At first I was super-scared, then I started thinking about all the things I like, all the kitsch stuff I enjoy, and I thought I really want to have it at home to enjoy it while I can."

◀ The lighting brand Swedish Ninja was its usual sweet self, displaying a pick'n'mix of Candy Little Circle wall lights. Available in the UK from amara.com, from £339



Cissi Ahlen's Stockholm home is a riot of bold colours and shapes, @mylifeinmulticolor

Although she is now cancer-free, she still suffers from anxiety. "Your interior is something you can control, and you can create your own safe space — and mine makes me calm," she says. "Also, if I am busy with something it takes my mind off worrying. And it helps me through the winter to be surrounded by my stuff. I have a lot of objects with smiley faces as well. Subconsciously maybe I'm drawn to that. I'm feeding myself with positivity." Ahlen recognises that same positivity in the colourful designs her fellow Scandinavian creatives have produced for design week. "Every time I go to the shows, I'm seeing more colour," she says, "but I'm still not seeing it in many people's homes yet. The biggest group of influencers, when it comes to interiors in Sweden, are still using really mellow colours. Greige is still super-popular. I think it's beautiful but it's not for me. I'm happy to be part of a scene that's trying to influence people to use more colour. I really think it helps you."

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Kitchen bins



◀ For those who don't want a bin that looks, well, like a bin. Not for sticky fingers, though. Oka Pandanus rattan pedal bin, £350, oka.com



▲ On a tighter budget, this sleek 30-litre pedal bin is a good-looking option. B&M soft-close bin, £30, bmstores.co.uk



► A bin on (non-skid) legs! And a rather stylish freestanding one it is too, with a 36-litre capacity. Brabantia Bo Touch bin, £187, brabantia.com



T For more bins go to [thetimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk)

▼ This stainless steel model has three 15-litre sections. Eko Ecocasa recycling bin, £149.99, lakeland.co.uk



▲ The retro diner vibes are strong with this 50-litre push-opening bin. Wesco Pushboy, £125, binopolis.com

Berkshire £899,950

Refurbished penthouse almost 1600 sq. ft. River area, Maidenhead. Gated complex. Walking distance to Elizabethan line with direct services to Liverpool St. Gaggenau appliances, concierge.



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