

# FORM



NORDIC ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN SINCE 1905 | 4 | 2011

ON THE CONVEYOR BELT  
THE DESIGN NOBILITY ON  
ROLLING OR FOLDING

TOP FIVE  
FANTASY THEME PARKS

RELAXING TIMES  
THE SWEDES BEHIND THE  
WORLD'S BIGGEST CRUISE SHIP

TOMORROW'S STARS  
EMERGING DESIGN TALENT



## BEYOND [ GUEST TYPEFACE ANGLAISE ] BELTS AND BRAIDS

ANNA KRAITZ ON CREATIVITY  
AND BEING A ROLE MODEL WHILE  
MODELLING A NEW DESIGN BY  
RISING STAR EMILIA ENGBLAD



## Fantastic Worlds

Everyone finds their own way in Iceland, the land of nature and fantasy. Katrin Olina is a designer who has travelled the world, but decided that when it comes to natural wonders, home is best

### INFORMATION

KATRIN OLINA

AGE 44

**BACKGROUND** Born and currently lives in Iceland, but has also lived in Spain, France, Belgium and Hong Kong. Educated in industrial design at ESDI in Paris. Worked with Philippe Starck, Ross Lovegrove and Michael Young. Has done interiors, furniture and patterns for companies such as Swedese, Rosenthal and Fornarina. Currently working on a book and an exhibition that will open at Lynfabrikken in Aarhus, Denmark on 26 August

**You have a lot of interests, including cabinets of curiosities. What attracts you to them?**

The idea of cabinets of curiosities is to us a bit like fiction, like diaries of the curious mind from the past, a visual journey into an explorer's world. I also like natural history drawings from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, such as Vesalius, Da Vinci, Durer, Rachel Ruysch and of course the legendary Linnaeus. The driving force of science – like in art – is curiosity.

**You are also into tarot cards, right?**

Tarot is a nice game and a spice to everyday life. That's how I see it. I find the cards amazing, the imagery and the symbolism. Tarot speaks to the subconscious and the soul. You might say it's about human nature and the psyche.

**Your designs are full of natural elements and fantasy creatures. It seems that you have a vivid imagination.**

I'm no expert on what happens in the mind, whether it's vivid or not. But I do believe that the mind holds infinite space and infinite possibilities. It's a case of exploring it and bringing some of the things there into reality.

**How important is imagination for the creative process?**

Without imagination, creativity must be quite difficult and innovation next to impossible.

**You say you have a romantic view of nature. What do you mean?**

Nature is awesome and stirs me deeply. Nature makes me humble because nature is the life force. It is frightening, soothing, dreamy,

impulsive, ingenious, flexible, raw, lush, intelligent, ruthless, giving, taking – all these things and much, much more. In Hong Kong, like other big cities where nature has been suppressed by the human hand, you can still feel the power of nature, underneath all the concrete, finding ways to survive. My grandfather was a natural scientist; perhaps I got some of my interest in nature from him. Iceland is also a good teacher. Nature here is raw and merciless but in its severity it's astoundingly beautiful. You really feel the silent inner life of nature at work here and it's very inspiring if you pay attention.

**What are your favourite places in Iceland?**

What I like most about this country is the vastness and the personal space it gives you. I like the south a lot because of the contrasts in the landscape: mossy mountains, wide-open sea, black sands, lava and glaciers. It's dramatic there; many of the active volcanoes are in the south, like the ones that have been bothering the world lately. The interior of Iceland, which is only possible to visit during the short summer, is another world inhabited by foxes, strange birds and sheep. It's a cold desert with hot springs scattered around between yellow, pink, green and black volcanic mountains.

**You are educated in industrial design but have turned to graphic design and illustration. What does graphic design have that industrial design doesn't?**

Freedom and speed. Illustration and drawing allows you visualize anything

you like quickly and efficiently, whether it is an interpretation of a client's idea or the expression of your own mind.

**You've also done some animations? Is that any different from working with "still" designs?**

They move! If I could, I would animate everything I do. I can't wait for technology to become more advanced. When I draw I usually see my drawings move in my mind's eye.

**There's a new interest in what's local and in discovering what is unique about a place. Do you have an interest in being local?**

The industrial world has created a lot of monsters, and there is definitely an urgency to re-evaluate our lifestyles. That has brought a whole new perspective and new interest in the way things are produced and where they come from. When it comes to furniture, products and clothes, this change is slower and is perhaps more complex. But I think we are in the process of a great change. What was feared might happen with globalisation, that we'd lose our identities and become this one big mass, is not actually happening.

Personally I'm quite focused now on narratives and illustrations around my own work. I guess they are quite local to my mind at this point but hopefully they'll speak to a few more once they are fully materialized.

**Sandra Nølgren**



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