



## **IT'S NORWEGIAN!**

**Opening speech Norwegian design exhibition in Helsinki 14.1.10.**

**Your excellency, distinguished guests,**

**First of all, I am very pleased to be here, and I would like to thank the organisers, the Finnish- Norwegian Cultural Foundation and Innovation Norway, for inviting me to speak here today.**

**I am not an art historian, nor am I a designer, so I shall not attempt to give you a consize historic positioning of Norwegian design.**

**However, I would like to say that over the last 10 years or so, we have had a clear impression that:**

- **a new generation of Norwegian designers have emerged – and they are creating some exciting results.**
- **Having had the opportunity to support them and follow their international appearances in cities like Milano, Stockholm, Torino and New York, it has been quite fascinating to notice an increasing interest from the international press for contemporary Norwegian design.**
- **It has also been very interesting to observe the increasing focus and media exposure we have obtained from the annual presentation of Norwegian design which we have done at the London Design Festival, With our exhibition 100% Norway.**

**Allow me here to quote our English curator, Henrietta Thompson, who is also design editor at Wallpaper Magazine:**

**“Say Norwegian design and the cultural stereotypes immediately conjured up, are blond wood, warm weaves, bright primary colours, and simple, organic, timeless forms. You can certainly find all these elements in contemporary design, but there is also something very fresh, independent and original too. This is partly because Norway’s contemporary design industry is comparatively young. As a result there is a sense of humor and lightness of touch that’s quite distinctive.”**

- **Over this same period a number of Norwegian companies have become increasingly more proficient in cooperating with designers in order to become more innovative, and thus obtaining improved competitiveness.**



**The exhibition you will see here, is focused on products which are particularly relevant to the Finnish market.**

**In my own personal, humble opinion the exhibition represents an interesting cross-section of promising young Norwegian designers, as well as some well established ones, a n d a number of Norwegian companies, the majority of which have established themselves as design-driven, international successes.**

**I hope you will enjoy it, and on behalf of the Norwegian Design Council, I am hereby declaring the exhibition for opened.**

**Thank you!**

**Jan R. Stavik.**