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Giroflex and Karimoku New Standard collaborate to launch limited-edition anniversary timber task chair Introducing giroflex 150 by BIG-GAME

Milan, 7–12 June 2022, 10:00–19:00

Press Preview: 6 June, 15:00 – 18:00

Gallery Assab One, Via Privata Assab 1, Milano (MM2 Cimiano)



Credit: Art direction by BIG-GAME, photography by Younes Klouche. Location Farel House in Bienne, Switzerland.

Founded in Switzerland in 1872 and now part of workplace-furniture specialist Flokk, the pioneering seating brand Giroflex celebrates its 150th anniversary this year with the launch of a landmark new office-chair design: the *giroflex 150*. Set to make its debut during Milan's Salone del Mobile in June, the giroflex 150 continues Giroflex's tradition of pushing the boundaries of office-chair technology and ergonomics, and marks a return to the brand's roots in wooden seating.

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For this limited-edition timber task chair, Giroflex partnered with Karimoku New Standard (KNS), the Japanese contemporary brand for wooden design furniture, which brings an unparalleled expertise in wood manufacture to the collaboration.

“Karimoku is delighted to collaborate with Giroflex on the timber task chair giroflex 150. In combining Karimoku’s expertise as a wooden furniture manufacturer with Giroflex’ impressive knowledge of office seating design, this collaboration sets a new standard for a wooden office chair.”

– Hiroshi Kato, Executive Vice President, Karimoku Furniture

Designed in a three-way collaboration between Giroflex, Swiss design studio BIG-GAME and Karimoku New Standard (KNS), the giroflex 150 is a distinctly contemporary interpretation of the classic wooden office chair, a celebration of the beauty of natural materials, and an homage to a century and a half of Giroflex design.

“Karimoku New Standard is defined by its collaborative approach, working with international designers and Karimoku’s skilled craftsmen. Collaborating with BIG-GAME, long-time personal friends and KNS partners, and Giroflex on this new wooden office chair, further connects the fields of home and contract and redefines a standard for basic, low-tech, yet comfortable and long-lasting wooden office furniture.”

– David Glaettli, Creative Director, KNS

Functionally and aesthetically suited to both home and office work environments, as well as meeting the sustainability expectations of the present day, the giroflex 150 looks to the future while honoring the past.

“We’ve embraced the truth that the future is informed by the past, and in collaboration with KNS and Big-Game, we reinvent the somewhat forgotten idea of the wooden office chair for the modern day. Combining the durability of wood, beautifully designed and handcrafted for a high-touch, with the ergonomic responsiveness of our flexible chairs, the result is a unique sitting experience that surprises in the most charming of ways.”

– Kristine Sønning Forsbak, brand manager, Giroflex

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Natural, recyclable, sustainable

In a rarity for office furniture, almost no plastic components are used, except for the castors, which use an industry standard material to ensure they are replaceable when worn.



Credit: The making of giroflex 150 by the expert woodworkers at Karimoku Furniture Inc. Photography by Yurika Kono.

The wooden parts of the giroflex 150 are fashioned from timber from Japanese oak species (*Quercus serrata* and *Quercus mongolica*) by the expert woodworkers at Karimoku Furniture Inc, Japan's leading wooden furniture manufacturer and parent company of KNS. The timber used is sourced from low-diameter trees that would otherwise be discarded or pulped to make paper. Once felled, these trees are cut and replaced by other species in an effort to enhance biodiversity (making the forest more resilient). Making use of their cutting-edge technology, originality and ingenuity with wood, the KNS team have developed ways to turn timber that is not typically used to its full potential into a beautiful and durable furniture material. Turning such wood into a long-lifespan product locks in CO₂, making KNS's approach one of the most sustainable methods to create products possible.

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"Karimoku New Standard's pursuit of high-quality outcomes includes responsible production, starting with the material itself. This sustainable approach not only reduces waste and energy, but also helps in supporting the local forestry and in revitalising the Japanese forests. The giroflex 150 is a great example of contemporary design made to last, inspired by Giroflex' tradition and produced in a sustainable way by KNS."

– David Glaetli, Creative Director of KNS

This wood is transparently sourced from sustainably grown forests in northern Japan and transported to Karimoku's workshops in Aichi Prefecture, the wood is then crafted with Karimoku's state of the art woodworking machines and meticulously hand-finished by their skilled craftsmen into the chair's backrest, seat, arms and footbase.



Credit: Karimoku Furniture Inc. Photography by Norio Kidera

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Ingeniously engineered for widget-free flexibility

The crafted oak components are held in place by a flexible steel structure and synchro mechanism cleverly engineered by Giroflex to fit under the seat. Putting simplicity at the forefront, other than the gas lift to alter the height of the seat, BIG-GAME have designed the giroflex 150 without the overcomplicated mechanisms sometimes found in modern office chairs. Instead, the properties of the materials and the sophistication of Giroflex's engineering allow the chair to naturally adapt to the weight of the sitter, and to dynamically respond to their movements.



The movement of giroflex-150 rendered by BIG-GAME

“We wanted a wooden chair with a very contemporary sensation of balance and dynamism to it. There is a tilt point underneath the seat and another one under the backrest. Using the sitter’s bodyweight to create the balance, this movement naturally accommodates different body positions throughout the day. The experience can be very surprising, as first-time users expect to sit on a rigid wooden chair and don’t expect the mechanisms, the softly articulated seat and backrest, to accommodate their posture.”
– BIG-GAME

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Credit: Art direction by BIG-GAME, photography by Younes Klouche. Location Farel House in Bienne, Switzerland.

Inspiration from the archives

To develop the concept for the giroflex 150, BIG-GAME turned to the brand's archives for inspiration, looking back over hundreds of wooden office-chair designs, dating back to the turn of the 20th century. Giroflex has a strong heritage in wooden chairs, having been founded first as a maker of bentwood furniture, before pivoting into workplace seating with the rise of office culture at the beginning of the 20th century.

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Credit: Art direction by BIG-GAME, photography by Younes Klouche. Location Farel House in Bienne, Switzerland.

One particular series of chairs, the Holson – created in the 1950s by influential German designer Arno Votteler – caught the team’s attention. Each key touchpoint of the Holson is made from wood and shaped for optimal comfort. It was a chair that was clearly built to last, from materials that aged with grace over time.

“Whenever we find a vintage Giroflex wooden chair in a second-hand shop, we’re amazed by how comfortable it still is. This is a great lesson from the past on durability and quality. People would keep these chairs throughout their careers, for all their lives.”
– BIG-GAME

BIG-GAME’s goal for the giroflex 150 was therefore to create a chair that matched the Holson in terms of character, comfort and longevity – a piece with heirloom quality that would age alongside its owner, while never faltering in performance.

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In contrast with highly padded and feature-laden office chairs, the giroflex 150 is intended to take things back to basics and to underline classic Swiss design values by being reliable, sturdy, understated, and of the highest possible quality.

At the same time, it was important to BIG-GAME, KNS and Giroflex that the piece should have a clear, contemporary look, and take into account the evolving needs of the modern working world. Today, we work from home workstations, flexible spaces, coworking communities and conventional offices – the giroflex 150 is designed to fit seamlessly into every setting.

Colours and finishes

As well as its natural oak colour, paired with a simple black-powder coating on the steel parts, the giroflex 150 is also available in a range of high-touch stained finishes drawn from a palette that BIG-GAME and Karimoku New Standard have developed over a number of years. Chosen for their transparency – revealing the rich texture and delicate grain of the wood – and their timeless versatility, colour options include black, grey, moss green, and indigo blue. This colour range ensures that the giroflex 150 complements any interior design scheme, while emphasising the extraordinary tactile quality of the wood.

“Karimoku’s manufacturing concept is best summarized with the claim ‘high-tech and high-touch’, which describes the perfect synergy of the most advanced technologies with highly-skilled craftsmanship. The same applies to the giroflex 150: After expertly selecting the oak wood, the shapes of the chair are milled out by a machine before each piece is sanded by hand and given several layers of spray paint by the craftsmen of Karimoku.”

– David Glaettli, Creative Director of KNS

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Credit: Art direction by BIG-GAME, photography by Younes Klouche. Location Farel House in Bienne, Switzerland.

Exhibition and limited-edition launch at Gallery Assab One in Milan

The giroflex 150 will be revealed in June 2022 during Milan Design Week, where Giroflex will celebrate its 150th anniversary. A special exhibition curated by Karimoku New Standard's Creative Director David Glaettli and Swiss design studio BIG-GAME in the up-and-coming art space and former printing factory Gallery Assab One in Milan will explore the brand's history, culminating in the giroflex 150. In the same space, part of the same exhibition and also curated by design curator David Glaettli is an installation by of Japanese tile company Tajimi Custom Tiles, featuring works by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Max Lamb and Kwangho Lee. Recently renovated, the exhibition space at Gallery Assab One features a beautiful round roof that allows for lots of natural light to illuminate the space from two sides. Only 150 chairs

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will be made available when the chair is debuted at the gallery and released for sale in June – making each one a collector’s item.

Assab One is a non profit organization founded by Elena Quarestani that aims at providing artists with a non-conventional environment for research and expression. Together with Marco Sammiceli, Elena Quarestani developed the exhibition format 1+1+1, which investigates the relationship between art, architecture and design through the work of three practitioners. The latest edition will take place during Milan Design Week in June.

Assab One features a range of spaces that attract creatives and art makers, amongst others renowned designers Forma Fantasma recently moved their studio into the former printing factory.

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Notes for editors

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Giroflex

Part of the Flokk Group since 2017, Giroflex's roots reach back to 1872 in Koblenz, Switzerland, when the company began life as a maker of bentwood chairs, shifting its focus to office seating in 1919. This led to the invention of the 'spring swivel' in 1926 – the first swivel chair with a suspension system. Ongoing advances in flexibility, comfort and ergonomic thinking have been a Giroflex staple for decades, and, in 1982, Giroflex launched one of the first swivel chairs with a synchro mechanism, optimizing the ergonomic experience of work chairs. Today, Giroflex continues to be defined by quality, precision-engineered to deliver the best possible sitting experience in mind, without compromising on design.

flokk.com/giroflex

Karimoku New Standard (KNS)

Founded by leading Japanese furniture manufacturer Karimoku in 2009, Karimoku New Standard is defined by its fusion of progressive ideas and manufacturing excellence. Bringing together the unique perspectives of Karimoku's craftsmen and a select group of international designers, the brand presents new standards in Japanese furniture design. Karimoku New Standard's pursuit of high-quality furniture includes responsible production, starting with the material itself. Sustainably grown Japanese hardwoods are sourced from northern Japan as part of an initiative to revitalize the forests and the industries they support. The low-diameter trees, which are often discarded or used as paper pulp, are processed in regional workshops before taking shape through a combination of skilled craftsmanship and advanced technology. Over the past decade the brand has evolved through its collaborative approach and the belief that true standards should not only be universal, but exemplary in nature. This philosophy continues to inspire creative director David Glaetli and the brand's designers and craftsmen, who strive to create innovative furniture of the highest quality, imbued with a sense of joy.

karimoku-newstandard.jp

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Karimoku Furniture Inc.

The origins of Karimoku date back to 1940, when Shohei Kato took over a long-standing timber company and established a small woodworking shop in the town of Kariya, Aichi. The company produced various wooden parts in the ensuing decades, developing a range of techniques and technology before launching its own line of wooden furniture in the 1960s. Building upon the concept of manufacturing high-tech and high-touch products, the company established bases in timber production areas and soon developed into one of Japan's leading manufacturers of wooden furniture.

karimoku.com

BIG-GAME

BIG-GAME is a Swiss-based design studio founded in 2004 by the designers Augustin Scott de Martinville, Elric Petit and Grégoire Jeanmonod. The studio design products and accessories for companies such as Alessi, Hay, Karimoku, Muji, Muuto, Nespresso and Moustache, generating products that can be described as simple, accessible, useful and optimistic. The studio has received numerous awards including the Swiss Design Award, the iF design award, the Wallpaper Design Award, the Good Design Award, the Hublot Design Award and Design Preis Schweiz. BIG-GAME's works are part of the collections of the Museum für Gestaltung, the Musée du Grand-Hornu, the Centre Georges Pompidou as well as the MoMA.

big-game.ch

Flokk

Flokk is the leading manufacturer of high-quality workplace furniture in Europe, developing a growing family of global brands. Flokk is the owner of product brands HÅG, Offecct, Giroflex, RH, Profim, 9to5 Seating, BMA, RBM, Malmstolen and Connection. A focus on the environment through several decades has enabled Flokk to become a leader in the development of sustainable furniture. The Flokk head office is in Oslo, Norway, with main production sites in Røros (Norway), Nässjö (Sweden), Turek (Poland), Hawthorne (USA) and the UK. In addition, Flokk keeps sales offices in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, UK, France, Switzerland, Singapore, USA, Canada, China and Australia. Flokk products are sold in more than 80 countries worldwide.

flokk.com