

## Q&A David Glaettli, Creative Director Karimoku New Standard on the brand's 10th anniversary



David, as the creative director of Karimoku New Standard, how does it feel to be celebrating a decade of the brand?

David: Since I have been involved very closely with the brand since its very beginnings, this is actually quite an emotional moment for me, on a very personal level. Actually, the 10 years roughly coincide with the time I have lived in Japan. So many things have happened - for me personally as for the KNS brand. It has been a long journey with many ups and downs, big challenges, discoveries, setbacks and of course, huge progress.

Are you looking back on the past ten years with pride and joy? What have you achieved for the brand in the ten years? What are your personal highlights?

David: We have come a very long way. While for Karimoku it was a big step to start working with international designers, KNS started

very small, with the prototypes of just 9 small pieces of furniture that we put in a gallery in Milan in 2010. In the beginning, it was basically more an experiment than a brand - a pioneering project and we were learning by doing, trial and error. Yes, the very good feedbacks we received and the fruitful collaborations with the designers made us move forward and over the years the brand grew and grew up.

The exhibitions in Milan have always been highlights, in particular maybe in 2012, we showed at Erastudio and suddenly had people queueing up around the block for our cocktail party. Or in 2016, when we showed in 5Vie and collaborated with the artist Chung Eun Mo, who then became a close friend of mine.

Karimoku New Standard is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the brand with exhibitions and events in Milan during the Design Week. What can we expect to see and experience?

David: At the fair we will show a relatively large number of new pieces including some concept models of lighting and a kitchen that all together should give an idea of where the brand came from and where it is heading to - therefore the title "present, past and future". We will also introduce the new visual identity and an exhibition design, based on the idea of a symbolic construction site. Unfortunately, we did not get as much space as we planned for, so the exhibition will be quite compact, the same size as last year.

In addition to the stand at the fair grounds, under the name "KNS Home and Garden" we will take over a small apartment in the Brera area with a large secluded garden and furnish it with KNS: Rather than an actual exhibition, we want it to be the brand's temporary home, where we can welcome friends, collaborators, supporters and fans to sit down and relax and feel at home. Japanese chef Shiori Goto will be present the whole week and prepare drinks and appetisers at the apartment's open kitchen.

What are your plans when it comes to the presentation and visual identity of the brand?

David: The brand has evolved quite drastically over the years, from a small selection of interior accessories to a grown-up interior brand, now with an increasing focus on contract furniture. To live up to these big developments, I felt it was necessary to renew the brand's visual identity and bring the brand in the right position for the coming 10 years. We teamed up with the Tokyo based graphic designer Rikako Nagashima (Village®) who is famous and infamous for her original creations and works mostly in the field of art, music and fashion to create a new logo, website and catalogue. I felt that rather than to go with a "commercial" solution, to work with Nagashima was in line with the brand's spirit to explore and find "new standards" and give younger creators a voice.

While the brand keeps its original values and spirit, the renewal of the visual identity marks a new chapter and allows the brand to keep evolving and reinventing itself.

Will the anniversary also be the start in a new direction for Karimoku New Standard? Will there be changes in the portfolio and collection? What is your vision for the brand for the next few years?

David: Some changes in the directions have already taken place over the past year but become finally more visible: the biggest change is reflecting the partial shift from almost entirely home use furniture towards contract furniture. That is a development that many brands are experiencing, but I think it is special in the case of a wooden furniture manufacturer. I am trying to steer the brand in an area that connects the fields of home and contract and develop designs that work in professional environments without becoming technical and keeping complexity to the necessary minimum. The new table system by Geckeler Michels, the Archive High Table by Christian Haas or the Lobby Sofa by BIG-GAME are some examples for this.

Besides this, Karimoku has recently started to use its profound know-how in carpentry and engineering to expand its activities beyond furniture. Countless new possibilities are emerging from this development, but while it is too early to say where this will lead, we started with kitchen and lighting concepts to give an idea of where this could take the brand in the coming years.