

# The Standard



Number 4

Aino Aalto's  
Riihitie plant pot and  
four other highlights from Artek

**artek**



# Home is where the planter is

The Riihitie plant pot by Aino Aalto is being brought into serial production 80 years after its creation.

Aino and Alvar Aalto pursued a seamless harmony between purpose and form in their designs; there's nowhere you can see that fine balance at work better than in the home and studio they built in 1936 in the seaside suburb of Munkkiniemi. Today, it's just a quick tram ride away from downtown Helsinki, but when the Aaltos acquired their plot of land on Riihitie Road, it was uninterrupted countryside.

The house turns its back on the street and faces south, with rooms wrapping around its tranquil terrace. There, two generous white plant pots still sit today, designed for the spot by Aino Aalto. The planters were presented at the Paris World Fair in 1937, but never went into serial production. Artek has decided that their time has come.

Since early 2017, these gently curving pots have been handmade in ceramic in three reduced sizes for indoor use and two colours—a bright white and a rich dark blue. Both shades were sourced from the bespoke ceramic tiles made for several of Alvar Aalto's buildings, such as the Experimental House on the Finnish island of Muuratsalo.

The Aaltos liked to keep nature close wherever they lived and worked, and the Riihitie plant pots continue to celebrate that tradition.

The Riihitie plant pots embody the Aaltos' belief that the small details are as worthy of our time and attention as the grand gestures.

# Aino Aalto

It's time to pay tribute to one of the 20th century's most inspiring designers.

Aino and Alvar Aalto played an equal role in the development of both their architecture studio and Artek, though history has, unsurprisingly, made more of him than of her. They worked together from her arrival in his office in 1924 until her early death in 1949.

Aino, born Aino Mandelin in Helsinki in 1884, was a pioneer, working passionately to create practical yet beautiful design that would improve everyday life. Photographs of her from the 1930s suggest a thoroughly modern woman.

Aino trained as an architect at the Helsinki University of Technology, graduating in 1920, then joining the studio of Oiva Kallio, who was then making his mark on Helsinki's architecture scene. Four years later, she was working with Aalto and married to him.

From the moment she co-founded Artek in 1935—together with Alvar Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and

Nils-Gustav Hahl—the artistic direction of the company became a major focus. Under her jurisdiction, all Artek designs were materially, structurally, and aesthetically as rigorous as could be.

Aino's interior projects were many—among them, the Paimio Sanatorium (1928-33), the Artek stores, and the Baker House (1946-49), a student dormitory at MIT in the United States. From these emerged pieces of furniture (Side Table 606 was designed as a footstool for Paimio in 1932) and exquisite textile designs. Her glassware stands out even today, though some designs are nearly 70 years old.

A designer with an extraordinarily clear vision, Aino Aalto we salute you!



Aino Aalto was instrumental in establishing the modern style of interior design in Finland and beyond. Functionality, simplicity, and clarity were at the heart of every project she undertook.

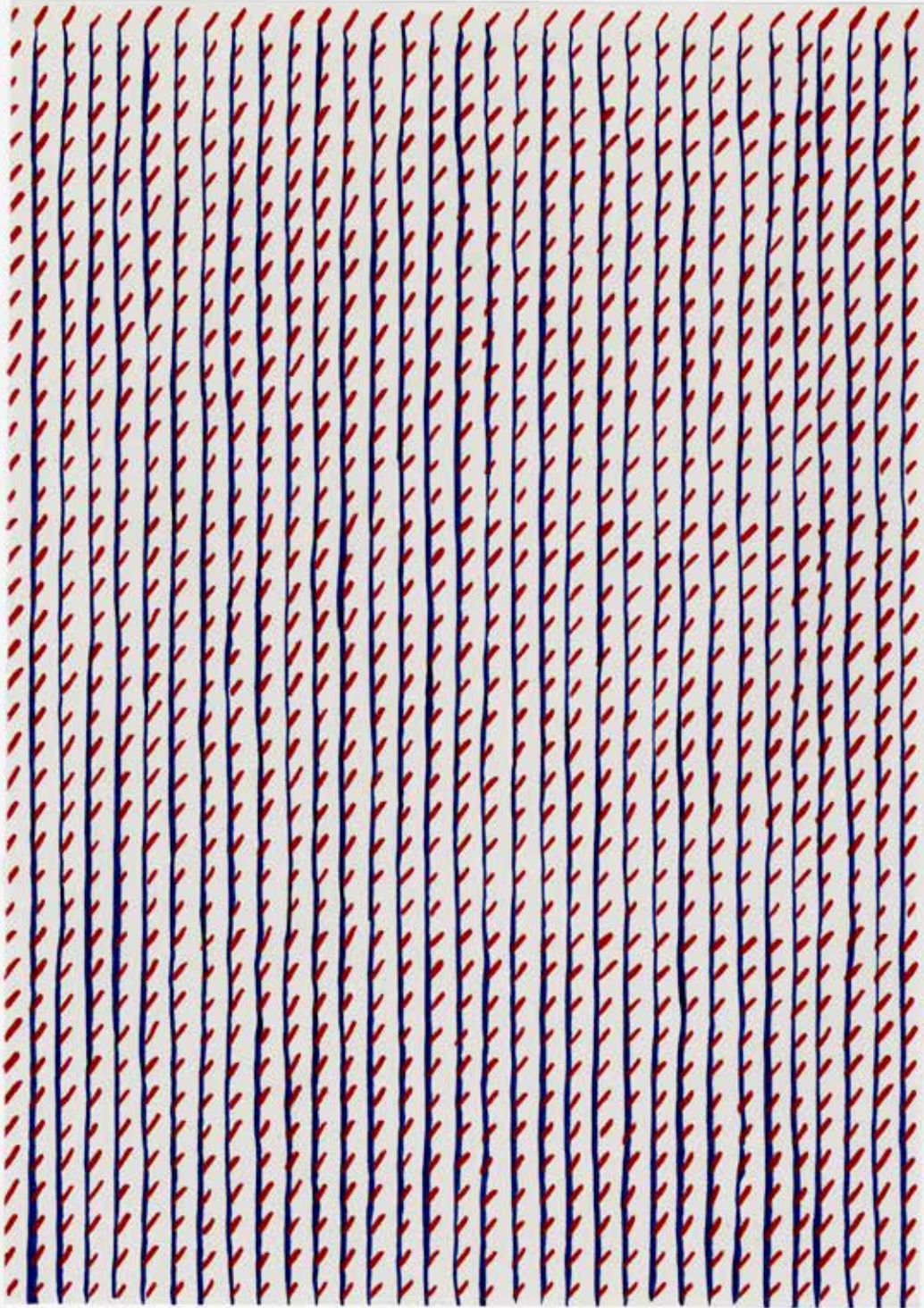


The Side Table 606, designed by Aino Aalto for the Paimio Sanatorium (1928-33) as a stool for taking off shoes, proved itself to have other uses in the home.



Many major Artek pieces were developed for the Paimio Sanatorium (1928-33) near Turku, Finland. The furniture and interiors were intended by Aino and Alvar Aalto to be beautiful and thereby enhance the patients' wellbeing.





# Rivi by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec

The humanity of the hand-drawn is at the heart of this new textile design.

The gifted Bouroullec brothers, Ronan and Erwan, started collaborating with Artek in 2013; after two years of development, the graphically striking Kaari series of tables and shelving was launched. Now, the brothers have created their first textile for the company.

The Paris-based designers have always benefitted from being a double act. Ronan studied industrial design and Erwan fine art, and ever since they started working together in 1999, the advantages of these combined sensibilities have been evident. Their work is refined, but full of warmth too.

Their new textile design is called Rivi –Finnish for line, row, or rank in the game of chess—and features parallel lines from which tiny diagonal strokes emerge. The pattern was hand-drawn by the brothers and includes flaws and irregularities, just like the natural wood

that is the major material used by Artek to make furniture.

Textile is important to Artek. It was named as a key category in the company's original manifest drawn up in 1935. Aino and Alvar Aalto saw fabrics as an essential part of interior design, and under Aino's artistic direction, patterns like the still successful Zebra were brought to the market.

The Bouroullecs' subtle and elegant addition comes in blue on white, white on blue, white on mustard and white on pale grey, printed on cotton. You can opt for running metre or pre-cut three-metre pieces or choose from a variety of readymade accessories – canvas bag, pouch, cushion cover, tray. Whether as a tablecloth or a curtain, a bed throw or a tote bag, Rivi takes Artek's textiles quietly and confidently into the 21st century.





Available in four colours and three fabric qualities, Rivi's hand-drawn pattern is characteristic of the Bouroullecs' unique design process.



Continuing Artek's long tradition of handmade patterns, Rivi follows in the footsteps of work by Aino and Alvar Aalto, Kaj Franck, and other designers, but has its own individual qualities and warmth.





# Happy One Hundred

Finland is celebrating 100 years of independence, and Artek is joining in with a series of unique products.

2017 is a big year in Finland—the country is celebrating 100 years of continuous independent democracy. And Artek, a company whose ethic and aesthetic has contributed significantly both to Finnish culture at home and its reputation abroad, has decided to mark the event in its own way. Breathing new life into some classic designs and introducing exciting new work by the Bouroullec brothers and the young Norwegian designer Daniel Rybakken, Artek is looking both to the past and to the future.

For just one year, Artek will produce a series of Finland 100 specials, a selection of Alvar Aalto's L-leg products that will be identified by four new linoleum surface colours and a stone white lacquer. Gentle colours—ash, pebble, olive, and smoky blue—have been chosen to suggest the cool calm

hues of the Nordic landscape. The L-leg tables and stools are all based on a solid piece of birch bent to a 90-degree angle that Aalto patented in 1933. The result is furniture that is functionally strong and aesthetically restrained. To ensure that it's also well-suited to contemporary times, the heights of the furniture have been carefully adjusted for a taller population. But even with new colours and measurements, the core values of Aalto's graceful design perfectly prevail.

Several of Alvar Aalto's tables and stools are relaunched in a stone white lacquer and new linoleum surface colours to celebrate 100 years of Finnish independence.



With a stone white lacquer finish and four new shades of linoleum—a material key to Artek's vocabulary—the classic Aalto tables and stools are given a fresh new look.



# The Domus Chair Finland 100

The Domus Chair—Finland 100 Edition has been created to mark Finland's 100 years of independence. While staying faithful to the original in form, the Finland 100 features exquisite materials and details that elevate it to the realms of the highly desirable.

The original Domus Chair was made in wood—the only available material in post-war Finland—and intended as a reading chair and for general use. Designed in the late 1940s by the celebrated Finnish designer and architect Ilmari Tapiovaara for the Domus Academica student dormitory in Helsinki, its multi-functional nature was paramount. The foreshortened arms make it perfect for pulling up to a desk or dining table, and the moulded plywood seat and back give it just the right amount of spring for real comfort. The Finland 100 has all these qualities, and more besides.

The frame is rendered in honey-stained birch, and the seat upholstered in fine Finnish reindeer skin from a small tannery in the mid-western part of the country. The aniline leather, treated with soluble dyes and no topcoat, shows every mark of the animal's natural life—the nicks, insect bites, scars—and develops a beautiful patina over time. The brass screws are a return to the single slit originals.

In fact, it might be a little too chic for a student dorm now—a truly grownup version of a brilliantly functional 70-year-old classic.



The soft reindeer leather of the Domus Chair Finland 100 shows every mark of the wild animal's life and develops a rich patina over time.

## Notes



### 1. The Aaltos' Home

In 1934, Aino and Alvar Aalto acquired a plot of land in Munkkiniemi, a Helsinki suburb, where they built a house and office. Completed in 1936, the building was used by the Aalto family into the 1990s. Today, it's a museum where visitors can experience the Aaltos' design ethos first-hand (though tours must be arranged in advance). The warmth of the interior is enhanced by a liberal use of wood, slate, and brick, while the exterior is an exercise in functionalism. The number 4 tram goes to Munkkiniemi from the Helsinki city centre, passing several other Aalto buildings along the way.



### 2. 1937 Paris World's Fair

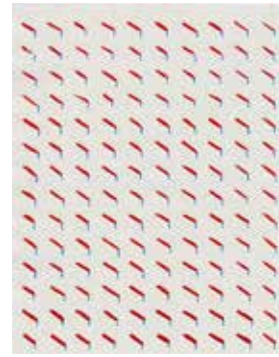
The 1937 World's Fair in Paris was designated the International Exhibition of Art and Technology in Modern Life; Alvar and Aino Aalto's Finnish Pavilion certainly fitted the brief. Their first building abroad, it was constructed in wood—the most traditional Finnish material—with the upper portion

composed of a dynamic steel framework. Peaceful courtyards were planted with flowers to Aino's specification. It marked the beginning of the Aaltos' international acclaim.



### 3. The Paimio Sanatorium and Side Table 606

The Paimio Sanatorium in Southwest Finland was completed in 1933 and established Alvar Aalto's reputation as both a modernist and humanist designer. Aino and Alvar designed the interiors and furniture to be as light and functional as possible, aiming to increase the wellbeing of the tubercular inhabitants through the quality and comfort of their surroundings. The Side Table 606 was one of the products to emerge from this project. It was originally designed as a stool on which to sit while removing shoes, but has found a second life as a stackable side table.



### 4. Hand-drawn

Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec, the French design duo from Brittany, have always put drawing at the heart of their practice. So when Artek asked them to create a new textile design, they drew it by hand. Rivi consists of parallel lines with small diagonal lines flicking off them; the imperfections that emerge from the low-tech process add to the charm of the design. In 2013, 850 of the Bouroullecs' drawings made between 2005 and 2012 were brought together in *Drawing*, a book designed by Swiss graphic designer Cornel Windlin.



### 5. Tablecloth

The Bouroullecs' Rivi design comes in four colours, either as running metre fabric or pre-cut 3 x 1.5 metre packages. It is available in three different materials—cotton, canvas cotton, and acrylic coated

cotton. Why not take the light cotton to make a set of napkins and the acrylic coated for a handsome tablecloth, following Aino Aalto's use of textiles to bring colour and warmth to the home? The non-crafty can stick to the readymades: including cushion covers, pouches, and canvas bags.



### 6. Finland

Finland has a population of just 5.4 million, though at 338,440 square kilometres, it's the fifth largest country in western Europe by area. It's notable for many things, including its 187,888 lakes, prodigious coffee consumption (12 kilograms/capita/annum), and high concentration of heavy metal fans.



### 7. Furniture Linoleum

Linoleum was first invented by an Englishman, Frederick Walton, in 1855. More than 160 years later, it is the perfect product for our environmentally conscious times. Made of natural materials, it's low

emission and biodegradable. And thanks to its matte surface, it's wonderfully tactile, naturally anti-static and anti-fingerprint. Furniture linoleum has a base layer of impregnated paper onto which the actual linoleum is pressed. Main ingredients are oxidised linseed oil and resin, wood flour and colour pigments.



### 8. Ilmari Tapiovaara

Ilmari Tapiovaara (1914-1999) left an extraordinary legacy of iconic objects, many of which sum up the very essence of Finnish design. After graduating in Interior Architecture at Helsinki's Central School of Applied Arts in 1937, he worked for Le Corbusier in Paris, then at Asko Oy, at the time one of Finland's major furniture makers. Among his most desirable and durable pieces are the Mademoiselle chair with its traditional spoke back that he designed in the 1950s and the ultra-minimal Kiki seating series from 1960. Artek has been producing both since 2010.

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Artek was founded in 1935 in Helsinki by the young idealists Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and Nils-Gustav Hahl "to sell furniture and promote a modern culture of living by exhibitions and other educational means." Today, the Artek collection of furniture, lighting, and accessories designed by Finnish masters and leading international designers comprises objects that are extraordinary in their clarity, functionality, and poetic simplicity. In the radical spirit of its founders, Artek remains one of the most innovative contributors to modern design, breaking new ground at the intersection of design, architecture, and art.

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