

PRESS RELEASE

Artek celebrates Finland's 100th anniversary

At imm cologne 2017, Artek presents Alvar Aalto's classic L-Leg products in a fresh new finish to commemorate the centenary of Finland's independence. Introduced in serial production 80 years after its creation, the Riihitie Plant Pot designed by Aino Aalto is also premiering in Cologne. The Artek booth is designed by PLY from Hamburg.

Classics in a new light: Finland 100 Aalto specials

Artek celebrates the centenary of Finland's independence by introducing several of Alvar Aalto's L-Leg products in a stone white lacquer and new linoleum surface colours. These Finland 100 specials are available throughout the anniversary year.

Through the late 1920s, Aalto experimented with wood-bending, collaborating with the furniture manufacturer Otto Korhonen and developing what became known as the "L-Leg," a solid birch piece bent to a 90-degree angle. Patented in 1933, it formed the basis of a versatile system of standard components that became the foundation of Artek's furniture designs. Although the L-Leg collection is based on a standard component, Aalto believed that standardisation in furniture design shouldn't prevent variety. 85 years after the iconic products were designed, Artek sheds new light on these L-Leg classics, introducing the Finland 100 specials.

The stone white lacquer has been a popular colour within the Artek collection for years, available on products by fellow Finnish master Ilmari Tapiovaara. With four new shades of linoleum, a material key to Aalto's design vocabulary, the L-Leg tables and stools are given a new, fresh look that highlights the understated beauty of these classics. The Finland 100 colour palette features four linoleum shades: ash, pebble, olive and smoky blue. All are muted tones that works beautifully on their own or together in a group. The subtle colours have been selected to last for generations and to age with grace.

Riihitie Plant Pot

Created by Aino Aalto around 1937 and used on the terrace of the Aalto family home on Helsinki's Riihitie Road, the plant pots embody the Aaltos' belief that the small details are equally worthy of our time and attention. Although the plant pots featured in the Artek presentation at the Paris World Fair in 1937, they never went into serial production. On the occasion of Finland's centenary in 2017, Artek introduces the plant pots in both the original shapes.

In 1934, Aino and Alvar Aalto acquired a plot of land on Riihitie Road in the outlying Helsinki suburb of Munkkiniemi. It was here the designers built the house that would serve both as a family home and an office, the site where the Aaltos could create the work that would change the course of modern architecture and furniture design.

Completed in 1936, the house was lived in by the family until the 1990s. Today, it's a museum where visitors can see the Aaltos' design philosophy embodied in their much-loved family home. While many details speak of functionalism – the windows, flat roof, and the bare simplicity of the exterior – warmth and cosiness are expressed in the abundant use of wood and slate, the brick hearths and lightly rendered brickwork.

Two plant pots sit on the large south-facing terrace. Designed by Aino Aalto for the family home, they are further testimony to the Aaltos' affinity with nature and natural materials. In 2017, Artek introduces the plant pots in both original shapes. The ceramic pots are handcrafted, the choice of material inspired by the tiles Alvar Aalto incorporated into many of his buildings. Reinterpreted in three sizes for indoor use, the plant pots are available in white or blue, both colours sourced from ceramic tiles on display at The Experimental House, the Aaltos' summer retreat on the Finnish island of Muuratsalo.

Finland 100

In 2017, Finland celebrates 100 years as an independent nation with continuous democracy. Finland is a young, egalitarian country. From the start, architecture and design made significant contributions to the development of its national identity. The great international success of Finnish design promoted the development of Finland's widely acclaimed design culture, with which Artek is closely associated. For decades, Artek has had a profound influence on interiors, lifestyles and everyday culture in Finland. The company itself has become part of the modern Finnish identity and its national cultural heritage.

Artek – Art & Technology since 1935

Artek was founded in Helsinki in 1935 by four young idealists: Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and Nils-Gustav Hahl. Their goal was "to sell furniture and to promote a modern culture of living by exhibitions and other educational means."

In keeping with the radical spirit of its founders, Artek today remains an innovative player in the world of modern design, developing new products at the intersection of design, architecture, and art. The Artek collection consists of furniture, lighting, and accessories designed by Finnish masters and leading international designers. It stands for clarity, functionality, and poetic simplicity.

For more than 80 years, Artek's products have enriched public spaces, museums, schools, restaurants, hotels, shops, as well as countless private homes all over the world. The company is headquartered in Helsinki, Finland, also home to the Flagship Store Artek Helsinki and the Artek 2nd Cycle Store.

Artek at imm cologne
16 – 22 January 2017
Hall 02.2, Stand K009
Mon–Sat: 9am – 6pm
Sunday: 9am – 5pm

Further Information:

press@artek.fi
artek.fi