

Futuristic Focus

We have landed. In an interiors world where your living room transforms ad-hoc into an office, your office into a lounge, a hotel foyer into a co-working space and a café into a cocktail bar for the evening.

Defined and rigid room structures are disappearing. Agile dynamics shape our lifestyle. Home, leisure and work all merge into one. At the same time, our radius of action is growing. Now increasingly aware of its fragility, we feel strongly attracted to nature and want to be surrounded by it: outdoors is the new indoors. Be it lounging, cooking or New Work, we can just as well do everything al fresco.

New luminaires play a key role for the success of these fluid settings. They create the atmosphere. From when we rise in the morning to when we go to sleep at night, in each moment, every adventure, be it indoors or out. They are smart, portable and lightweight, versatile, sustainable – and fascinatingly beautiful!

The Light Movement

Due to their compact size and breath-taking development, LEDs provide us with ever new technical and creative possibilities. So now the design of a lamp no longer depends on the light source. At Light + Building 2020 the theme of mobile luminaires takes centre stage. The upskilling of LED technology – delivering more lumen, lower energy consumption and a more compact design – means that cumbersome cables can be ditched in certain scenarios. Like in smart phones or tablets, powerful rechargeable batteries or mini solar panels are integrated to provide hours of power. Small table lamps or lanterns “to go” are the pioneers of this new territory. They are designed with maximum versatility – featuring integrated loops or hooks – allowing them to be suspended from or positioned on walls, ceilings or anywhere you like, be it indoors or out. Right where you need them.

In the same vein, this evolution will offer more creative freedom for floor lamps, which are now also becoming portable. In this segment Light + Building will also feature surprising novelties in new shapes, colours and lightweight materials such as high-quality plastics and aluminium: a height-adjustable lamp base, as well as rotation and tilt options underline the versatility of these new mobile light dispensers. This creates a new playing field for designers, whose floor lamp concepts and designs had to be more context-specific and rather static in the past due to the constraints of the power cord.

Smart light for personal moments

Reduction is another buzzword that fits the dynamic lifestyle. Lamps can be smaller and lighter than ever despite a high lumen output – i.e. light intensity. We will increasingly find solutions that are adaptable to each situation and our individual needs. Smart added features such as sensors, dimmers or networkable high-performance LEDs make it possible to design a single luminaire with multiple functions. Any lighting atmosphere from warm to cold, from perfect working light to a candle-lit mood

can be achieved with just one luminaire. Touch panels for dimming are elegantly integrated into the design. And innovative warmDim technology automatically adjusts the colour temperature of the luminaires to natural light.

Creative light spirit

No wonder, then, that the boundaries between light and object are constantly blurring. A field day for experimental design. - Hello light sculpture!

Light + Building 2020 demonstrates: Luminaires can take any shape now – light fixtures are poetic statements, opulent or elegant, graceful props for our living and work spaces. Whether alight or not. Ever highly effective, ever dynamic. The moment has also come for using unusual materials for luminaires: leather, textiles, mesh-like and ultra-light fabrics, paper, cardboard, cork or rubber as well as porcelain, ceramics and recycled materials are now entering the world of luminaire design – with striking surfaces and new ground-breaking processing structures.

Growing world of hybrid products

Micro-scale LEDs enable fusions of luminaires with other functions or products: luminaires made of sound-absorbing materials are ideal for providing sound insulation in open-plan offices. Light fixtures can also be embedded in shelf elements, for example. Or serve as vases. By the way: green light combined with plants gives nature a stronger presence in small urban living spaces. And lighting fixtures with USB plugs, Wi-Fi connectivity and loudspeakers can serve as multimedia stations, for example.

Copper wires for power supply can now also be embedded in textiles – say in straps and fabric sails. Luminaires of a hybrid nature are becoming the norm.

And now modular product architectures have entered the fray: elements can easily be swapped and switched to adapt to changing room situations: While bright aluminium is perfect for the workplace, we prefer to relax in a more laid-back atmosphere with lampshades out of fabrics or dark translucent glass.

Light days for future

In our new world, modular systems not only make sense for aesthetic reasons but also due to their ecological credentials: they also make it easier to add updated technology – without having to dispose of the entire product.

On the whole, luminaires of the future are heroes of sustainability. Not only do LEDs reduce power consumption but compact designs also require less material. We will increasingly see ecological, natural or recycled materials being used in harmony with a future-forward aesthetic.

The new naturalness of lighting is an on-going trend. MIT scientists have teamed up with KVA architects, both from Boston, to research a plant-based lighting solution – using nanoparticles to engineer living plants with new functionalities. These projects already hint at what the future of lighting will look like both in aesthetics and technology.