

ARCHITECTURE *

DESIGN +

ART +

FASHION +

TRAVEL +

LIFESTYLE +

Qubique Furniture Fair 2011, Berlin

DESIGN / 1 NOV 2011 / BY SOPHIE LOVELL



Qubique, Berlin's new furniture fair showcased a selection of international furniture brands for the first time in Berlin's decommissioned Tempelhof Airport HIDE CAPTION START 1/37

The ever skeptical German design scene wrinkled its collective nose just over a year ago when Offshow AG trumpeted the launch of a new 'Next Generation Tradeshow' - Qubique Furniture Fair - in Berlin. There were the usual mutterings of 'why do we need another furniture fair?' as well as doubts of its chances of survival, especially when the huge imm in Cologne seemed to be already struggling against the might of Milan, and Messe Frankfurt's ill-fated Design Annual had also just bitten the dust after only a couple of seasons.

Unperturbed, the Offshow organisers were confident that, with Qubique, they could fill what co-founder Matthias Schmid perceives to be a 'gaping hole' in the design-conscious 28-48 age group market between IKEA and ultra-high-end furniture with a curated selection of the 'best in international concepts in design and interiors'.

When they opened the doors of Qubique to the trade public on the 26 October in the spectacular setting of the former 1930s <u>Tempelhof airport</u> (which saw its last plane leave the tarmac in 2008), they had managed to fill some 35,000 sq m of floor space with a very respectable selection of brands from <u>Foscarini</u>, <u>Thonet</u> and <u>Arper</u> to <u>Vitra</u>, <u>Artek</u> and <u>Established & Sons</u>.

Qubique clearly sets out to offer the complete fair experience package with offscene exhibits, restaurants and entertainment all together on site. As well as a
prominent section of work by young and individual designers and groups
curated by Margriet Vollenberg and Margo Konings who have brought us the
highly enjoyable Milan off scene highlight Ventura Lambrate for the past three
years, there was a 'Gallery Walk' of eight interesting and upcoming
international design galleries situated in the former departures hall, curated by
local gallerist Martin Rinderknecht. These areas in particular satisfied the
appetite of those in search of the latest thing, as well as intriguing design
objects.

Gallery highlights included a new collection of Acciaio series pieces by Max Lipsey for New York's Matter, a space divider prototype called Arabi by UAE designer Khalid Shafar, made of traditional egaal headbands and brass for the lovely Beirut gallery Carwan and a cabinet of recycled wood by Portuguese designer João Mouro for Portugal's Show Me gallery. In the Ventura Berlin section we particularly admired the RoomService collective stand as well as Paul Heijnen's wooden cabinet, Daniel Heer's new Keil stool colours and llot Llov's bead string lamps.

Although product premieres were thin on the ground in the brand section (compared to Milan) we still found quite a few treasures to admire, including, among others, Established & Sons' stand in the airport's former fire station, designed by Wallpaper* favourites <u>Claesson Koivisto Rune</u>, some stunning new additions to the already impressive range from Munich-based <u>Schellmann Furniture</u> and Sebastian Wrong's launch of his new personal venture: <u>The Wrong Shop</u> with small series pieces from <u>Konstantin Grcic</u>, <u>Jerszy Seymour</u> and <u>Richard Woods</u> himself.

All in all, after four days of viewing, discussing and enjoying the catering served in vintage Art Deco tents by no less than three chef-led teams that was definitely superior to the usual fair fare, there was little sign of further wrinkled noses amongst visitors and exhibitors alike. In fact there seemed to be an air of cautious optimism that Berlin, the creative capital without capital that loves to party, may well at last be starting to crack the commerce side of design. We reckon we'll be back next year to find out.









