

# Social Studies

TRENDBOOK



Issue 01  
Minimalism

*The Social Studies Trendbooks are a resource for designers, architects, trendforecasters and research strategists to quickly reference a curated selection of projects on a particular theme. Each project is selected based on the way that the form and functionality come together to produce a unique example of the subject matter, in this case, on minimalism.*

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Good design is as little as possible. Less, but better, because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.”*

*– Dieter Rams*

For us at Social Studies of California, minimalism is not about an aesthetic or a stylistic way of looking at design, but instead it is about striving to remove the superfluous in the products we use, the spaces we inhabit and in the visuals that we use to communicate.

Minimal design has its origins in utilitarian design, in the early 20th c Bauhaus formalized those ideas into a school of thought based on theories like, Less is More. Dieter Rams’s definition of minimal design is probably one of

the most succinct definitions, ‘less, but better’. He is not saying that ‘less is better’ but instead, ‘less, but better’. Minimal design is a way of editing an idea until what you have left are only the core pieces, the essential components.

Years ago, when I was getting my Masters in Architecture, a professor said something that stuck with me, ‘As an architect, you need to get the most out of the least’. The following projects are examples of that idea, Get the Most Out of the Least.

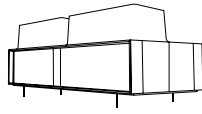
**Shawn Weiland & Lauren Woodward**  
*Social Studies of California*



*The Desert House*

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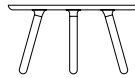
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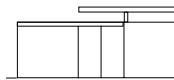
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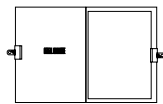
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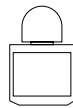
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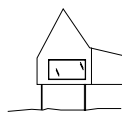
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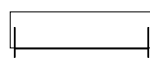
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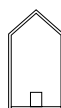
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## THE VIPP HOUSE

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*If you could go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?*

The Vipp Shelter is built with the minimalist philosophy of living in mind. Every object within the home is thoughtfully curated. Located near Lake Immeln in the Swedish Wilderness, the 592 sq. ft. micro-home integrates seamlessly into the forest. The large panes of glass on each side of the home gives guests an unadulterated view of the landscape which makes you feel completely connected to nature. The exterior of the house is covered in black sheets of steel connected with black metal fasteners, resembling the side of a ship's hull, yet oddly, looks natural in its bucolic setting.

The dwelling is elevated off the ground on steel stilts, causing the house to feel like it is floating above the forest floor. A small bridge connects a dirt and leaf covered path to the entrance of the house, creating a rite of passage into the unique structure. The craftsmanship of the shelter is meticulously detailed with custom rolling glass doors and felt-lined walls throughout. The dark tone of the interiors causes your eye to constantly look out toward nature,

reinforcing the notion of where your attention should be.

It is not so much a piece of architecture than a curated living experience. When you buy a Vipp Shelter, everything is provided for you, the bed sheets, the toilet brush, the table, the chairs and even the iconic Vipp trash can. Vipp has created an object of desire for those design-centric people who want the luxuries typically associated with high end living.

Morten Bo Jensen, the Head of Design for Vipp explains, "The shelter is conceived more like a product than a piece of architecture that melds seamlessly with its surrounding. We wanted to conceive something different; an escape in the form of an object designed down to last detail, where the only choice left for the customer, is where to put it". What Vipp created is a "turnkey" dwelling.

The beautifully designed modern structure can be bought as a "plug and play" getaway or you can stay in

*Photography by Vipp*









their micro-hotel and have the Vipp experience. The luxury one bedroom hotel is ideal for travelers who want to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and experience a private natural surrounding in the middle of the Swedish wilderness. “We craved birdsong and open skies. To get out of the city with all the necessities and nothing more. The shelter is the result of that dream. A pod of tranquility

designed as a large-scale Vipp product,” explains Morten Bo Jensen, Vipp’s Chief Designer.

While the Vipp Shelter is definitely not designed for the masses, those with an appreciation for meticulously executed architecture will find themselves enamored by the thoughtfully curated experience.

*“The objective was not to make a house or a mobile home. Vipp is rooted in the manufacture of industrial objects, so the term shelter is a typology that allows us to define this hybrid as a spacious, functionally generic, livable object”*

*– Morten Bo Jensen, Chief Designer in Vipp.*



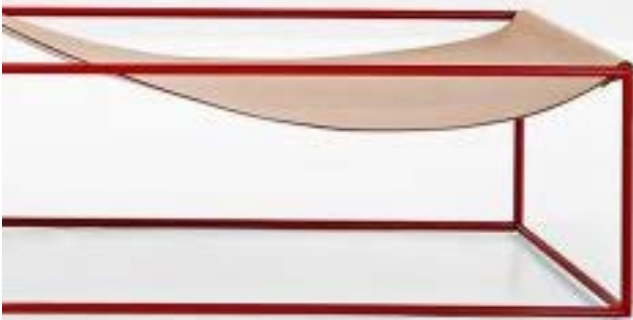


## DUO SEAT + LAMP, MULLER VAN SEVEREN

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The Duo Seat + Lamp lives somewhere between art and design. Fien Muller and Hannes Van Severen live in a world that also straddles art and design. Managing to combine a chaise lounge, a side chair and a lamp into a single playful piece of furniture all with a minimal use of materials and a minimal visual design language. While it is obviously a piece of furniture, it is not completely focused on function. The object is a red powder coated steel structure with leather draped from the steel support bars to create the form of the chair seats.

*Photography by Side Gallery*







## ODGER CHAIR, FORM US WITH LOVE

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Form Us With Love, a design studio out of Stockholm, Sweden was commissioned by Ikea to create a democratic chair in which form, function, price, quality and sustainability come together to create a chair for the masses. Behind its simplicity lies complex engineering, sustainable injection molded plastic using 30/70 post-industrial recycled wood-plastic composite and a locking system which is so innovative yet simple in its execution. The no hardware the chair is assembled with two keys which lock the base and seat together. The chair is available in three colors: blue, white and brown.

*Photography by Jonas Lindström*















## ONELINE RACK, KLEMENS SCHILLINGER

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The Oneline Rack plays with the idea of a continuous line. It is made from a single piece of mild tube steel and powder coated in black. Four basic bends give the structure integrity while still remaining lightweight. The clothing rack dimensions were dictated by the maximum length of steel tube available, which is six meters. Klemens Schillinger is an Austrian designer based out of London. His goal is to develop simple yet well thought-out products, design methods and 'Do It Yourself' recipes. This can result in almost self-evident product solutions with a sparse amount of charm, minimal use of materials and poetic accent.

*Photography by Leonhard Hilzensauer*







## TABLO SIDE TABLE, NORMANN COPENHAGEN

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Tablo is a minimalistic table without redundant details that is quick and easy to assemble without screws. All you do is hand screw the wooden legs into the pre-threaded table top. The name Tablo is a reference to the English 'table' and the French 'tableau', which means a scenically placed arrangement. Nicholai Wiig Hansen designed Tablo and it is available in both a large and small size and in seven different color combinations. With its simple mode of expression it is suitable for almost any home.

*Photography by Normann Copenhagen*







## NUBO DESK, LIGNE ROSET

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The Nubo desk is a collaboration between Gamfratesi and Ligne Roset. It is a simple space saving wall box which transforms into a wall mounted desk. Inspired by the Pan-Am blue travel cases of the 1960s, it's rounded cloud shape is unusually light to the eye. The structure is natural oak veneer on beech plywood. The external face of the work surface is sleeved with polyester foam and upholstered with aquamarine Scandinavian Divina wool, which acts as a pin board when not in use. Gamfratesi studio was founded in 2006 by danish architect Stine Gam and italian architect Enrico Fratesi. the studio is based in Copenhagen.



*Photography by Tuala Hjarno*





## DESERT HOUSE, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

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*"Most midcentury architecture is about extending into the environment, but this house, which is inspired by the style's strong horizontal lines, is more about creating a world within. I call it my little fortress with an open heart."*

*- Architect Jim Jennings*

In 1999, architect Jim Jennings and writer Therese Bissell bought a small parcel of untouched desert land in Palm Springs and over the next ten years designed a vacation getaway. "Once we had the property, I couldn't resist designing a house," explains Jennings. "When you're your own client, you can be as demanding as you like. And you know how difficult everything will be, especially when it appears simple." An 8-foot high concrete block wall defines the Desert House, surrounding the 730 square foot house and two outdoor courtyards, creating a 2,900 square foot indoor outdoor living space.

Completed in 2009, the minimalist dwelling with its clean lines, overhanging floating roof and iconic mid century concrete block wall, exemplifies the modernism that Palm Springs is so famous for, exempt for one unique quality. Unlike the mid century modern houses around it, which open up to the landscape, the Desert House is inverted, completely closed off to the nature except for the views of the San Jacinto Mountains and rich blue sky above the perimeter block wall.

To the outside world, the house

resembles a fortress, but once inside, the large expanses of glass blur the lines between inside and outside. The 15-foot glass doors that open from the bedroom and living area into the courtyards, give occupants unobstructed views into the pool area. "The emptiness of the pool courtyard intensifies one's sense of the mountain," Jennings notes. "It is a void that works in counterpoint with the solid."

The steel deck roof floats above the interior space by white steel beams and columns, causing bands of clerestory windows to capture fragments of the surrounding blue sky and desert mountains. The roof deck cantilevers 8-feet beyond the walls, providing the interiors of the house with shade from the piercing desert sun.

The furnishings of the house repeat the theme of sparsely curated yet thoughtfully designed. A Charles and Ray Eames wooden leg splint is hung on the white wall giving color to a monochromatic backdrop and a Parentesi lamp spans from ceiling to floor next to the bed. A few custom pieces are also integrated such as the white powder coated aluminum bed on

*Photography by Jim Jennings Architecture*









a wood base in the bedroom area and the outdoor dining table and benches made from white polyester resin fiberglass.

Bissell explained the rule for all the furnishings and materials of the house, “No surface that can’t be sat on in a wet bathing suit”. That was the rule that governed the design selection and influenced the ultimate decision for the chairs when she found a recent design from Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, Cappellini’s Spring plastic chair.





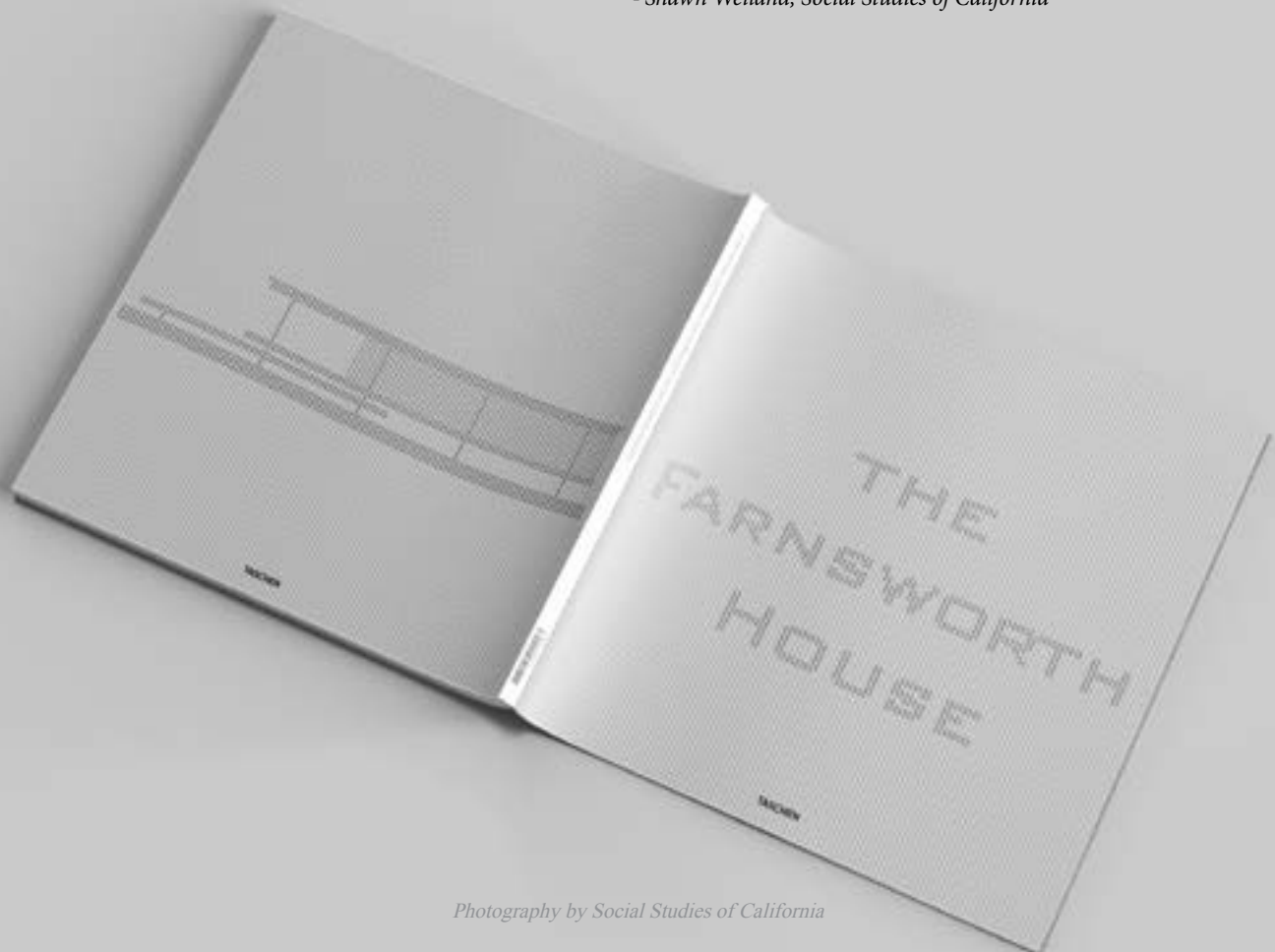
## THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE, SOCIAL STUDIES

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The design of the Farnsworth House is based on a grid of dots. By simply changing the color of the dots, designer Shawn Weiland of Social Studies of California reveals the cover art of the book. This technique is used on the front cover to spell out the title of the book, and on the back cover, as a way to draw a side elevation of the house. The visual technique was inspired by the simplicity of the Farnsworth House and its basic use of lines as design language.

*“The idea for the book cover came directly from the design of the Farnsworth House. The architect, Mies Van Der Rohe, uses clean lines and minimal architectural elements, and my goal was to capture that simplicity in the design of the book. I decide to use a grid of circles as my medium and constrained myself to only changing the color of the circle to convey the information.”*

*- Shawn Weiland, Social Studies of California*



*Photography by Social Studies of California*

THE  
FARNSWORTH  
HOUSE

TASCHEN

## LESS AND MORE, K. KLEMP & K. UEKI-POLET

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The design of the Less and More book follows the philosophy of none other than Dieter Rams. Less and More is edited by Klaus Klempe, an expert in the field of product design and an international authority on Dieter Rams' work and Keiko Ueki-Polet is one of Japan's most renowned design curators. The 808 page book showcases over 300 color product images, sketches, models and designs. The layout of each page follows the Dieter Rams philosophy of 'Less, but Better' and strives to get the most out of the least.

*Photography by Ode To Things*



# Less and More

The Design  
Ethos of  
Dieter Rams

## CEREAL MAGAZINE, RICH STAPLETON

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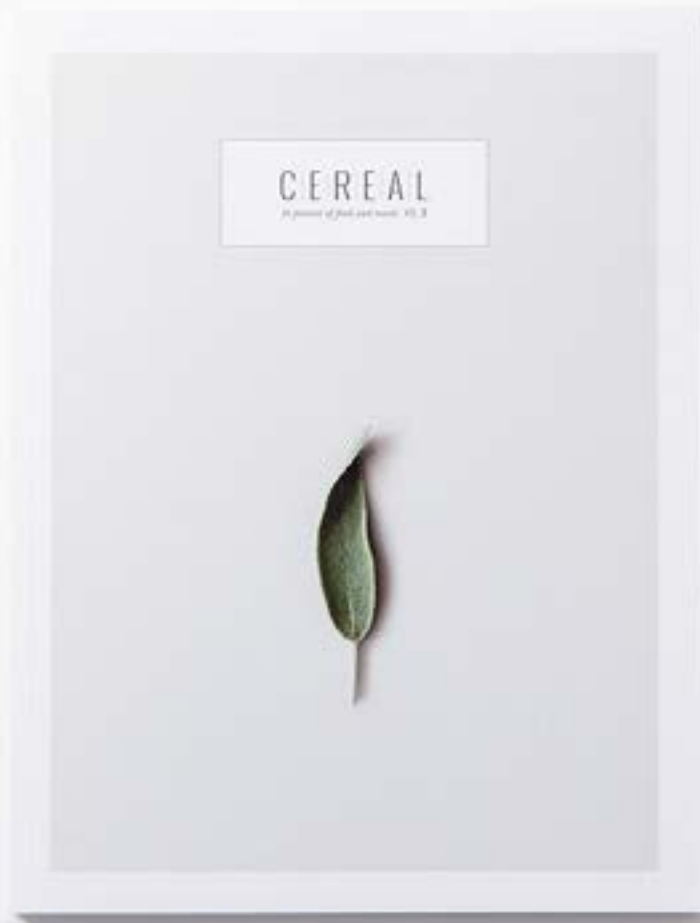
Cereal Magazine is known for its use of spare layouts, clean imagery and simple grid page layouts, all signature moves of Rich Stapleton, its co-founder and Creative Director. Stapleton who is also a photographer developed the aesthetic of the magazine based on his own visual style in photography.

*"I wouldn't personally label my aesthetic sensibilities as minimalist. From photography to fashion, I am always simply looking for an unfussy approach, to give the subject focus. Saying that, there are those who are typically classed under the moniker of minimalism that have been a great inspiration to me. Everybody views the world in a slightly different way. The colour palette observed in my images is simply the result of my specific vision, the way I see the surrounding landscape through the lens of my camera. The same can be said for framing and subject matter. These three components work in collaboration to give my images a particular look and feel. When I travel, I am always looking to my environment for the elements and aspects of the destination that appeal to these values."*

- Rich Stapleton, Cereal Magazine

*Photography by Cereal Magazine*





## BYREDO BRANDING, MOSES VOIGT

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Byredo is the brainchild of Ben Gorham, a Stockholm based perfumer and fragrance house. It was founded in 2008 and when the brand began, Gorham wanted a very specific look to the brand. “I worked with Swedish typographer Moses Voigt and we wanted to kind of mimic the fact that all the luxury houses create their own typography. It took a lot of time and it didn’t come out perfect, but it captured an old, new world feel that I thought was really important to launching this type of product and brand without having any history.” The design, art direction, identity and packaging was conceived by Swedish Creative Director, Moses Voigt from the Acne Art Department. The collaboration includes a custom typeface based on modernist principles and 1900’s gothic qualities. The overall branding is modern yet timeless through its simple and minimal design philosophy.



*Photography by Byredo*









BYREDO PARFUMS  
**BLANCHE**  
CRÈME MAINS

e 30 ML 1 OZ. NET WT.

## COMMON PROJECTS, P. POOPAT & F. GIROLAMI

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In 2004, Common Projects was started to create a luxury sneaker line with a sleek, elegant, and minimal aesthetic. The brand identity was based on those same values. “We couldn’t find a good, high-quality sneaker—a better version of the Chucks or Adidas we used to wear but just as cool.” Flavio Girolami explains. The signature of a Common Projects shoe are ten gold numbers on the outer heels of each shoe, which describe the color, size, and model. The numbers on the shoes have come to represent a status symbol and appreciation of minimal design.





*Photography by Common Projects*



## HIGH HOUSE, QUEBEC, CANADA

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*“The High House plays with the limit between interior and exterior, inviting people to gather in spaces immersed in nature.” explains the architects.*

*- Delordinaire Architects*

Minimalism does not need to be boring, just look at the High house by the French based architects, Delordinaire. The High House is a small winter cabin located in Mont Sainte-Anne, a popular ski resort 40 km north of Québec in Canada. Formally, the High House is not different than a typical gable roof house, except for three distinct architectural moves, it has been aggressively raised off the ground on stark black stilts, the symmetry of the roof has been offset and all the adorning has been removed.

The footprint of the house is hyper efficient. The advantage of raising the house off the ground, and using the stilts and cross-bracing, have defined a new outdoor space which typical would not exist, especially in a snowy mountainous region. As Delordinaire founders Adrian Hunfalvay, Erwan Lèveque and Jean Philippe Parent explain, “Elevated stilt constructions are typically used in warm climates and flood zones. This winter chalet uses the stilt typology to create a protected ground floor area with an outdoor stove, providing an unusual space

where residents can be amongst nature and the snowy exterior, while still enjoying protection from the elements.”

The contrast of the thin black columns and the solid white mass of the house, would make you think that the house would be visually off balance, yet it rests in a perfect harmony and a striking appearance against the snowy winter landscape. “On a cloudy, snowy day, the house blends into the white landscape, almost disappearing, and on a summer day the minimal white structure cuts a clear form against the surrounding green hills,” said the architects.

The High House is clad in white concrete panels and a white corrugated metal roof, giving the visual impression that it is floating above the ground. The architects go on to explain, “The clean, sharp lines and volumes are achieved through the use of white concrete panel cladding and corrugated steel roof panels.” The white materiality is contrasted in the interiors by the use of an exposed wooden substructure. The floor to ceiling glass window in the lounge area of the house allows for



*Photography by Delordinaire*





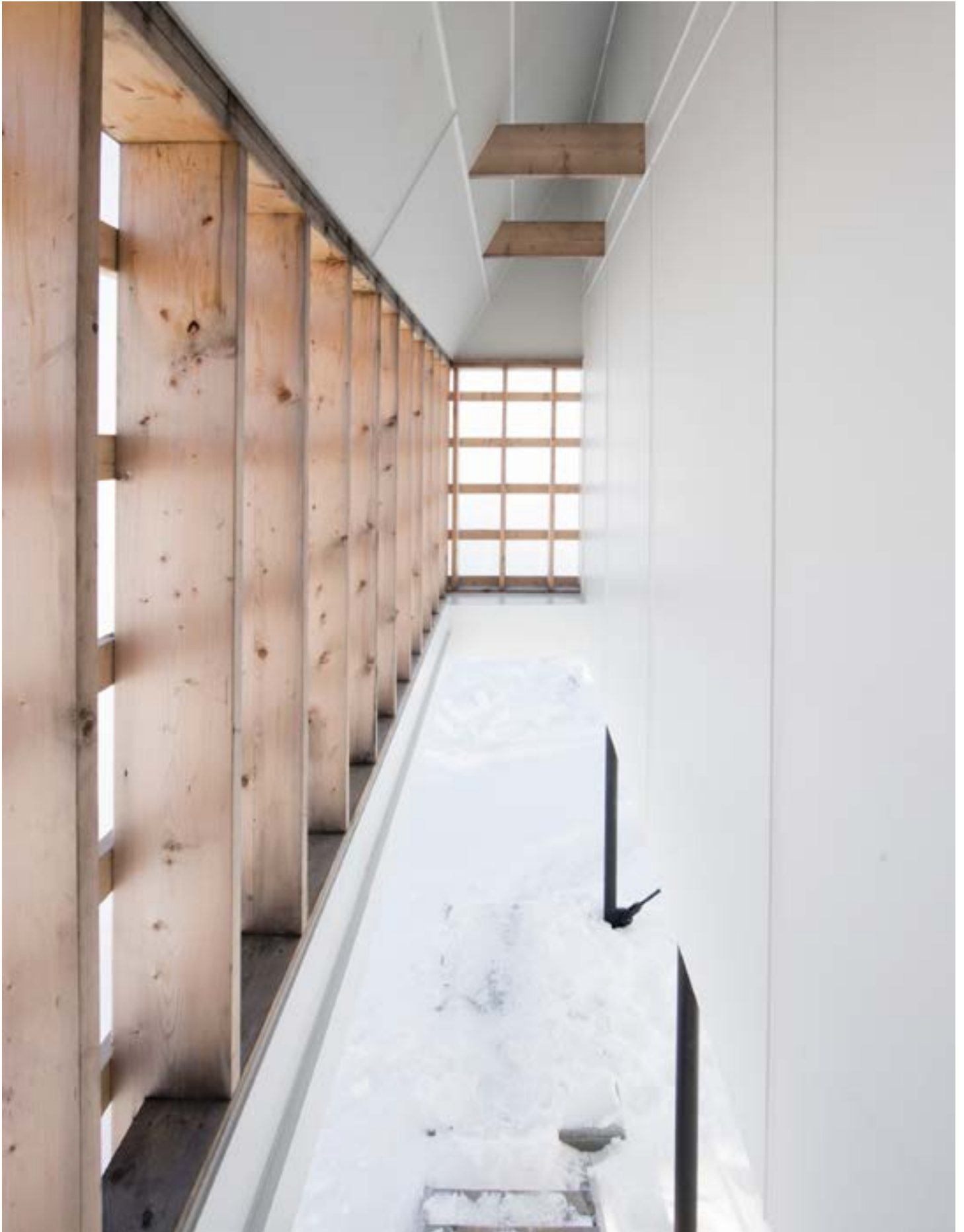


uninterrupted views of the slopes of Mont Sainte-Anne, as well as, provides ambient light throughout the day.

“The High House plays with the limit between interior and exterior, inviting people to gather in spaces immersed in nature.” explains the architects. The black steel entry ladder, which is made from the same material as the stilts, leads you up from the outdoor living space through a translucent light well. The house contains two bedrooms, a

bathroom and an open-plan lounge and kitchen. The asymmetric roofline at one side of the dwelling is to compensate for the two bedrooms which cantilever out over the landscape.

The minimalist private chalet is a marvelous example of designing around the context of a site, adapting to the changes that the site has to offer and standing for conceptual architectural ideas about what Architecture can be.





## SWEEPER & FUNNEL, JAN KOCHANSKI

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There are times when a designer comes up with a product that is so clever in its execution that you wonder which is better, the idea or the product. The Sweeper & Funnel falls in this category. Made from natural horsehair and beech wood, the sweeper is a minimal design which slips into the funnel and can be hung from its fabric loop. The funnel has the form of a typical dustpan except for one unique twist, it allows the dust and dirt to slide through the handle into a waste basket. The funnel is created by injection molding plastic into its streamlined shape which the waste easily passes through. The designer explains, “I wanted to create an object which, thanks to its aesthetic

and functional quality, would slightly enhance the quality of our lives and make everyday chores more pleasant.”

“Most of the dust pans sold are a design of low aesthetic value. My intention was to design a simple, refined in form and functional solution – an object enjoyable to use. The key innovation is the use of the dust pan’s handle as a funnel. Thanks to that you won’t have problems in removing the dust even to a small bathroom dustbin. The set can be hanged in a cupboard or storeroom on the loop attached to the end of the sweeper.” Jan Kochanski, Product Designer

*Photography by Ode to Things*







## KAMI WOOD CUP, MASANORI OJI

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The Kami Wood Cup Collection is designed by Masanori Oji and handmade by Hidetoshi Takahashi at his family run workshop in Hokkaido Japan. Wood carver Hidetoshi Takahashi was born in Hokkaido, a region renowned for its forests and wooden furniture. The word Kami translates to paper in Japanese, and you instantly understand why as soon as you touch the cup. The collection is made from Castor Aralia wood. Takahashi uses traditional lathe, common in woodworking, to meticulously shape down the wood to 2 mm thick. The wood is then sealed with a food-safe polyurethane coating. The design is a beautifully simple form which is completely absent of decoration.

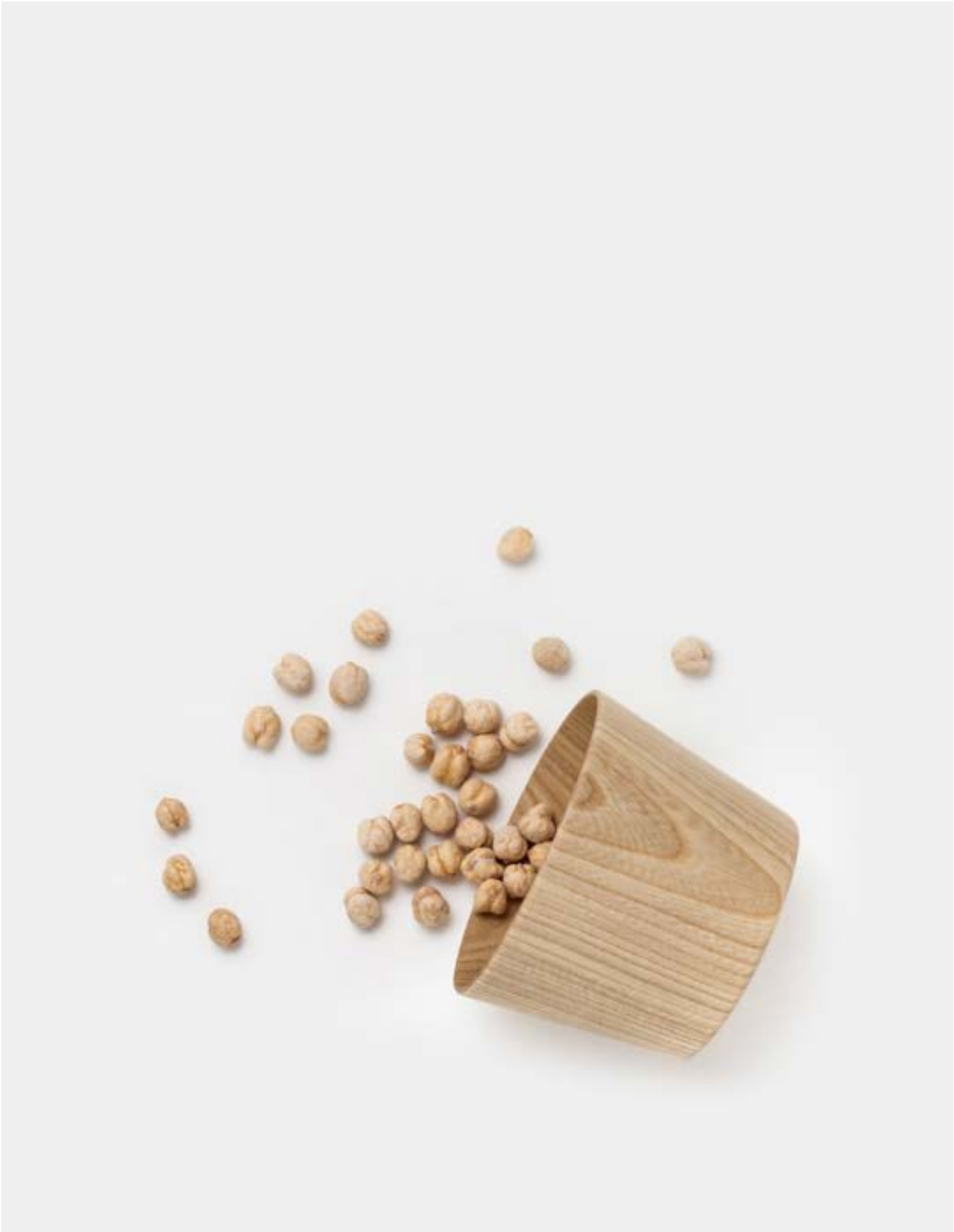
*“When I design, I give my full attention to the material and technology involved. I constantly ask myself, “Is this the right material?” and “Is this the right technology?” I never use certain material or technology just so that I can achieve a certain form. It is often mistakenly assumed that there is a “perfect form” in the world of traditional arts and crafts. This isn’t true. It is quite important to search out the beautiful appearance buried in the gradation between the raw material and the finished product.”*

- Masanori Oji

*Photography by Ode to Things*









## HASAMI PORCELAIN, TAKUHIRO SHINOMOTO

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Hasami Porcelain was born under the creative direction of Takuhiro Shinomoto of Tortoise in Venice, California, who seamlessly combined traditional Japanese craftsmanship with modern tableware. Shinomoto designed the Hasami porcelain collection as a set of domestic ceramics which could seamlessly stack and lock into each other. The pieces are made of stone from Japan's Amakusa islands, ground into powder. That powder is then transformed into a muddy clay and packed into plaster molds, each designed to account for 12% clay shrinkage in the kilns.

*Photography by Hasami Porcelain*







## STAND & FELT BATH FIXTURES, NORM ARCHITECTS

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Norm Architects, a Copenhagen based architecture and design studio created a collection of minimalist bathroom fixtures and home furnishings for Ex.t. The collection includes Stand, a bathtub and basin, and Felt, a series of modular wall shelves. The pieces feel light as they sit within their simple, black metal structures, hovering above the ground.

*“From the very beginning, our goal was to create design objects that were beautiful and sculptural yet at the same time light and airy, in an industry sector, bathroom furnishings, which often tends to be dominated by visually heavy furnishing elements. In line with our minimalist philosophy, we tried to reinterpret the Modernist style of the 1920s and 30s, stripping it of its decorative excesses to reach the point where there is nothing more to add or take away in order to make the product better.”*

*– Kasper Ronn and Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen*

*Photography by Norm Architects*







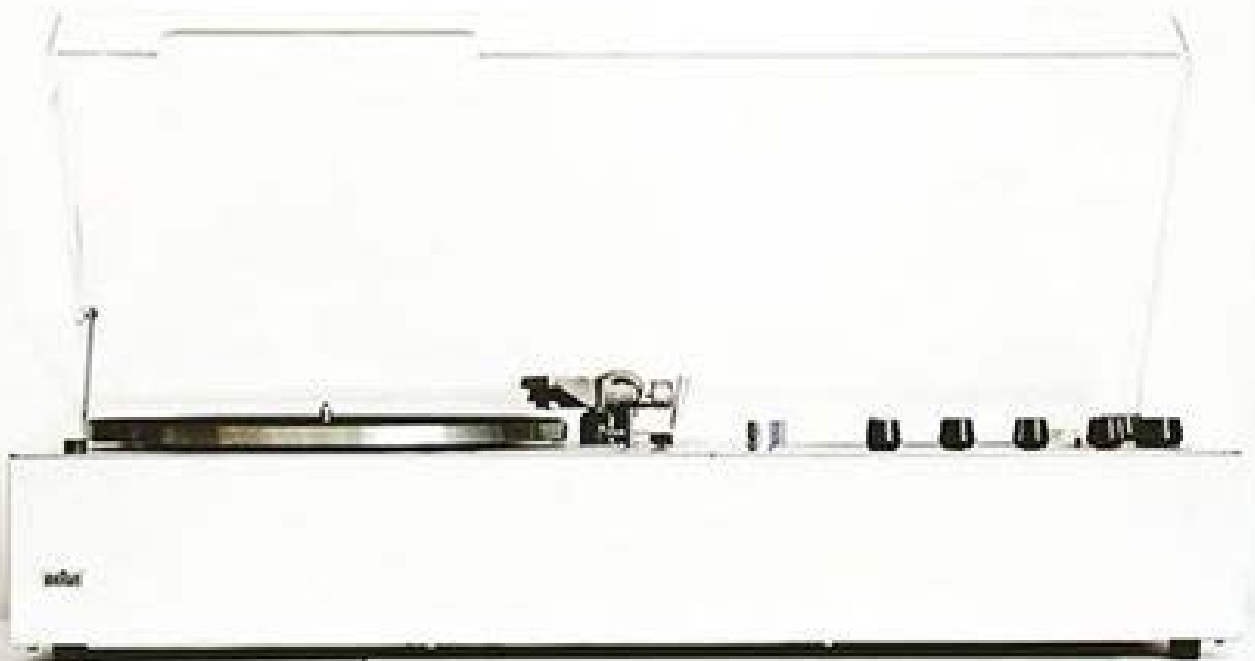




## BRAUN RECORD PLAYER, DIETER RAMS

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If you're a designer, there is a good chance that you already know of Dieter Rams. He arguably has had a bigger impact on product design than any other designer in the 20th c. You only need to look as far as the ubiquitous Apple product line to see his lasting influence. In the 1950s, Dieter Rams became the design director at a German company called Braun, which made consumer electronics. During his tenure at the company he created several record players which sum up his design ethos of "Less, but better".





*“Good design is innovative. Good design must be useful. Good design is aesthetic design. Good design makes a product understandable. Good design is honest. Good design is unobtrusive. Good design is long-lasting. Good design is consistent in every detail. Good design is environmentally friendly. And last but not least, good design is as little design as possible.”*

*- Dieter Rams, Product Designer*



## CASA TINY, PUERTO ESCONDIDO, MEXICO

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All activities at Casa Tiny are in direct relationship with the stillness of the place.

Located in Puerto Escondido, a small surf town on Mexico's idyllic Oaxacan coast is a small 26 square metres home called Casa Tiny. The first project of a young 27-year-old architect Aranza de Ariño, Casa Tiny is a single room vacation retreat situated in an area of dense vegetation near the ocean. Inspired by the cabin on a wooded lot near Walden Pond that literary hero Henry David Thoreau created, Casa Tiny was designed as "A Walden for Two", and promotes the idea of simple living.

Casa Tiny is simple. Ariño only used two materials throughout the dwelling. The roof, floors stairs, walls and furnishings are all constructed from cast in place concrete, giving it a robust feel. Native parota wood, a dark honey colored timber, is used throughout the house, giving a warming contrast to the grey concrete. The wood is used for the doors, windows, closets, and shelves. The spaces of the house consist of a kitchen, bathroom, and open mezzanine bedroom which is accessed by a simple alternating concrete staircase. Every space has been thoughtfully curated for its intended function. At Casa Tiny there is no wasted space. Set back from the road amongst vegetation, gives the occupants complete

privacy while still being exposed to the natural elements. The dwelling is accessed via a winding footpath and entered through a side door near the swimming pool. To say that Casa Tiny has an indoor/outdoor feel would be an understatement. The doors and windows are more like semi-covered openings, allowing the sand and wind from the beach to blow through the cracks, and the snakes and scorpions are frequent visitors, adding to its charm. There are two concrete terraces connected to the house, one with a swimming pool and another that extends the dining area into the natural exterior elements.

"All activities at Casa Tiny are in direct relationship with the stillness of the place," says de Ariño.

As you approach the house, the first thing you notice about Casa Tiny is the concrete gable roof protruding above the tops of the trees and vegetation. Oddly, it looks out of place, like a foreign object dropped in the Mexican jungle, yet once inside the structure, the space feels very natural. Looking out from the house, stunning views of the hills and ocean in the distance captivate you, bringing you closer to nature.

The house was commissioned by Clau-















dio Sodi who is the younger brother of Mexican Contemporary artist Bosco Sodi, who founded the nearby Casa Wabi Foundation, a multidisciplinary art center. Casa Wabi is designed by the famous Japanese architect Tadao Ando. Casa Wabi opened in 2014, putting the sleepy surf town on the map as an exotic cultural and artistic destination. Comparing Casa Tiny and Casa Wabi, it is clear to see that architect Aranza de Ariño was influenced by Tadao Ando, specifically with the use of cast concrete as a dominant building material. Yet Casa Tiny does not feel like an imitation, but rather as a ode to Ando and a continuation of the concrete and wood vernacular of Casa Wabi.

The architect was able to capture the idea of simple living with one basic architectural move, the concrete kitchen table. The 5.4-metre concrete kitchen table begins as a prep area for meals and extends outdoors into a communal place for guests to eat and enjoy the sunshine. It is the gathering place where, food is enjoyed and conversations continue well into the night.

The rawness and simplicity of the materials set the tone for how you should behave when visiting Casa Tiny. It's all about nature and relaxation. Lounge in the comfortable hammocks, chill out in the private dipping pool, walk in the nearby jungle and gardens or surf the ocean breaks along the beach.





## STAY IN TOUCH

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*“If you give people nothingness, they can ponder what can be achieved from that nothingness.”*

*– Tadao Ando*



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