Folkform

The Hardboard Factory, Rundvik

The Leather Tannery, Tärnsjö

The Glass Factory, Okrouhlice

The Brass Foundry, Limhamn

The Lamp Factory, Örsjö

The Furniture Industry, Vrena

Novellas
Folkform
Production Novellas

PROLOGUE
Foreword by Max Fraser ............................... 2
Folkform on the Production Novellas .................... 5

PRODUCTION NOVELLAS
The Hardboard Factory: Rundvik ...................... 9
The Glass Factory: Okrouhlice ....................... 29
The Brass Foundry: Limhamn .......................... 41
The Lamp Factory: Örsjö ............................... 51
The Furniture Industry: Vrena ....................... 57
The Leather Tannery: Tärnsjö ......................... 63

EPILOGUE
Excerpts from texts .................................... 71
Biography ................................................ 74
Collaborators .......................................... 75
Notes ..................................................... 76
Colophon ............................................... 78

This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition Libreria Folkform,
Located at Legatoria Conti Borbone,
5vie Art+Design Milan 4-8 April 2017
Since forming the Folkform studio in 2005, the Swedish duo of Anna Holmquist and Chandra Ahlsell has steadily developed a reputation across the Scandinavian design scene and beyond. Their relationship was nurtured while both studying for an MA in Industrial Design at Konstfack College of Art, Craft and Design in Stockholm. In less than a decade, Folkform’s output has been exhibited and sold internationally, even acquired by The Norwegian National Museum of Art and Design and The Swedish National Art Museum.

My first encounter with Folkform was in 2007 at a small display of their work at Designblok in Prague. Their showcase included furniture made from Masonite – a key building material used during the creation of the Swedish welfare state in the 1930s. The work investigated how perceptions of a simple mass-produced material such as hardboard can be altered by design. The duo had interfered with the production line by scattering organic matter onto the wet composite boards. Once pressed, a series of “quick fossils” were formed, resulting in a collection of mass produced one-offs that see value bestowed on the cheapest wood going.

This project is representative of Holmquist and Ahlsell’s obsession with materials and their interest in exploring the hierarchies that we bestow on them. The duo often combines original or authentic material with those that mimic the originals. For example, their works include a bench made from a patchwork of real and faux leather, or a cabinet combining Carrara marble with a laminate look-a-like more commonly used to make kitchen worktops. Nearly everyone who sees the pieces thinks the fake slabs are the genuine, forcing us to question whether authenticity should always determine an object’s value.

Their shared enthusiasm for Swedish heritage coupled with a desire to work with small-scale, local production has set them on an inquisitive path to challenge the anonymity of global mass production today. Folkform has always felt the need to remain close to production and provenance, describing their work as an investigation of old industrial processes and craft techniques.
That investigation has prompted them to explore struggling local industries and imbue such industries with renewed relevance while on the brink of extinction. Their work succeeds at challenging our general perceptions around the making of objects, while strengthening the contemporary relevance of old materials and processes in a society obsessed with the newest and latest.

Max Fraser, Design author and commentator
Folkform

On the Production Novellas

An old book is not just literature but often a hand crafted artefact in itself. Like an archaeological object it can tell about a lot more besides the author and her texts. In this project we aim to explore the old craft of bookbinding as an art in itself. The book, just like a vase or a cabinet, represents a production process of thinking, shaping and transforming a material through which knowledge is created.

Through the manufacturing of Production Novellas, we attempt to communicate knowledge of the design production process behind the objects, focusing on past industrial processes and craft techniques. The Production Novellas are an ongoing investigation of manufacturing traditions and old industrial processes in local contexts and craft techniques that are threatening to disappear. The novellas include memories, situations, fragments and scenes from the production process as described by the designer, through both visual and textual material. Through the Production Novellas we wish to communicate the spirit and history of the place where the objects are produced and try to tell the entire story of how the product was made, and by whom, this being the key to the narrative of the pieces.

In a day and age when products increasingly are imported and consumed from countries where labour is cheap and production anonymous, it is often difficult for the consumer to trace the manufacturing process of a product. Therefore, a transparent history of product origins becomes especially important.

Collaborating with the bookbinders workshop craftsmen at Legatoria Conti Borbone in Milan Old town we will manufacture our first series of Production Novellas and in parallel explore the manufacturing tradition of bookbinding, the work of the skilled craftsmen involved in the production of the some times hundred year old books in the workshop, the printer and his types, the artist who drew the illustrations, the woodcutter, engraver or lithographer, who transferred the artist's drawing to the woodblock, the copperplate or the lithographic stone, the colourist, and the bookbinder.
We believe, that in this time of increased digitalisation of texts, the book as a physical object will become increasingly desirable. Through the crafting of Production Novellas we journey into our industrial heritage exploring the intersection between the mass produced and the handmade textual and materialized forms of knowledge production.
PRODUCTION NOVELLAS
The collaboration with the Masonite hardboard factory was important since it marked the beginning of a series of design projects in which the vicinity to the production was a fundamental and essential part in the story of the final product. The visits to the hardboard factory and later on to the metal foundry and the glass grinders also became stops on a voyage into the history of a dying Swedish industry. By focusing on the places, the craftsmanship and the industrial manufacturing processes behind the products, Folkform wanted to shed light on new opportunities but also have an impact on this manufacturing industry on the brink of extinction before it was too late.

OPPOSITE PAGE – The Masonite hardboard factory in Rundvik, Västerbotten in the very North of Sweden.
THE LAST OF THE HARDBOARDS

It has now been seven years since we laid down the first flowers at the Masonite hardboard factory. In May, the whole factory will be transported to Thailand. The Norwegian group has sold the wood processing to Metroply in Thailand and the old machines from Rundvik are to be reassembled at a new facility near the Cambodian border. Nordic pine will be replaced with Eucalyptus as the chosen raw material.

For us, the collaboration with the Masonite hardboard factory was important since it marked the beginning of a series of design projects in which the vicinity to the production was a fundamental and essential part in the story of the final product. The visits to the hardboard factory and later on to the metal foundry and the glass grinders also became stops on a voyage into the history of a dying Swedish industry. By focusing on the places, the craftsmanship and the industrial manufacturing processes behind the products, we wanted to shed light on new opportunities but also have an impact on this manufacturing industry on the brink of extinction before it was too late.

In a time where many of the products we consume are imported from countries where labour is cheap and the production is anonymous and impossible for the consumer to trace, the sincere and transparent story of a product’s origins is more important than ever. Our project also reflects the current social debate regarding the role of globalisation in terms of the manufacturing industry and constitutes an attempt to initiate a discussion of the rate at which local craftsmanship and production techniques are disappearing. In the expanding global market it is near impossible for a designer to work with the production still based in Sweden.

About the location

The first time we visited the factory in Rundvik was an early winter morning in 2005. The Head of Laboratory Jan Persson collected us from the airport. After what seemed an eternity in his blue Volvo on a country road lined with dark forest on each side, we drew closer to the factory. We were completely taken aback - it felt as if time had stood still since it was built in 1929. The beautiful brick building with its majestic chimneys was still being used and we were given a tour of the factory. Steaming wood pulp filled the space with its particular odour and the loud noise of the machines was persistent – almost frightening. The heat was overwhelming. Jan Persson showed us the large steaming press that would compress the Masonite material. He showed us the machine hall, where hundreds of gears and engine parts lay spread across the floor. We said a quick hello to the factory employees, who were sat in a circle having their coffee break.
What does the Masonite hardboard factory tell us about the time we are living in? Quite a bit, we would say. It tells a story of a globalised world in which the domestic manufacturing industry of Sweden has a hard time competing with the cheap products from low-waged countries. The factory also symbolises a different story, namely the one about how energy consuming manufacturing processes and crafts are disappearing in Sweden. They will never make a profit, as the energy costs are too high. In their wake, a complex environmental debate follows. We live in a society of mass-consumption that breeds a system built on long-distance transports and production in low-waged countries.

The woodchip pulp

When the factory was still operational it was surrounded by ten metre high mountains of woodchips from the surrounding sawmills; this waste constituted the material that the boards were made of. The woodchips were mixed with water and compressed under enormous pressure.

This cheap, local raw material from the great forests of Norrland was the fundamental element in the manufacturing of Masonite hardboard. Items made from wood have long been one of Sweden’s most important products. In Rundvik, Västerbotten, the first Masonite factory was built in 1929. Masonite was a cheap surface material designed to utilize the woodchips produced by the sawmills. The woodchips are mixed with water and then compressed. Thus the resulting board material is both environmentally friendly and renewable.

During the 1930 Stockholm Exposition, Masonite was one of the foremost construction materials used. There are few materials with as much inherent theory of knowledge as this hardboard. Underneath its surface lie many layers of history. Masonite is closely linked to functionalism and during the Stockholm Exposition in 1930 it was used as a construction material in several of the model houses that were built for the exposition. The areas of use for the material seemed limitless during this period.

The Masonite hardboard was part of the construction of the Swedish Welfare State and became a symbol of the period’s belief in the future. Since the hardboards were used all over Sweden at this time, and by a large part of the population, you can still find traces of them today. Many people have a well-established personal relationship to this material and would recognise the surface anywhere. Despite the fact that in later years the material has unfortunately mainly been hidden inside ceilings and behind veneer, it was definitely a challenge to breathe new life into a material with such an extensive history.
Mass production and craftsmanship on the production line

How did we come up with the idea of pressing plants into the boards? This is a question we have attempted to answer many times. To us, it seemed too obvious to just create yet another “product”, which was the aim of the particular design competition advertised in 2004, in connection to the 75th anniversary of the factory. Instead, we wanted to alter the composition and expression of the material by blending in a new material in the wood pulp. We came to the conclusion that organic materials, such as thin plants, would be best suited to this purpose, since they would combine with the wood pulp to create patterns on the surface.

We drew up a sketch of a Masonite hardboard with plants pressed into the surface, and submitted it to the competition. The material did not yet exist, other than as an idea.

After a few weeks, we heard from the competition jury, who announced that we had been given an honourable mention and that the material would be exhibited at the architectural museum in only a few short weeks. However, the flower Masonite was still just a sketch. We now had to quickly get to the factory and initiate the practical implementation. We received an invitation from the Head of Laboratory, Jan Persson – an incredibly important person in this process - because it was he who believed in our ideas. We booked our flight and bought as many flowers and herbs as we could carry from Hötorget in Stockholm. With a carrier bag full of flowers each, we arrived at the Rundvik factory.

Our initial experiments were conducted at night, whilst the product line was not running. Jan Persson conducted all of the first tests with rose petals in secret and it turned out that our idea worked. However, the colour of the rose disappeared and we ended up with something that looked like wilted leaves.

We climbed up the side of the production line where the Masonite hardboards were manufactured and began to scatter flowers one and all, in order to form the patterns we wanted in the 3 minutes we had at our disposal as the regular production came to a halt on behalf of our flower experiments. With fear-tinged delight, we found ourselves literally in the middle of a mass production – in the heat, the loud rumbling noise and the humidity from the press.

Once the boards had been displayed at the architectural museum and published, we were commissioned by a number of architectural firms to create interior designs using the Masonite, for example, for the Fjällnäs Chapel and the head office of Diligentia in Stockholm. We received so many requests that we had to stop buying flowers at Hötorget and instead initiate collaboration with various herb gardens in Västerbotten, who would deliver sacks full of herbs directly to the factory so that we could make our hardboards on a larger scale. When the first
sack of thyme arrived early one spring morning, the staff at the factory entrance thought that the delivery had ended up in the wrong place and ardently argued, “This is a Masonite factory, not a restaurant.”

We began designing our own furniture using the floral hardboards and after we exhibited them at the Milan Furniture Fair, we started getting orders from all over the world. It is absurd to think that the last order of flower Masonite we received prior to the closing of the factory was from the Queen of Jordan, who ordered boards with pressed-in olive leaves. These boards turned out to be the last we ever made.

The Masonite cabinets for Svenskt Tenn
On 4 April 2011, the last Masonite hardboards were manufactured in Rundvik. The steam press is now silent. At about the same time as the factory closed, we received a call from a man called Per Wikström. He is the grandson of Carl Wikström – the man who founded the Masonite factory in Rundvik in 1929. Merchant Carl Wikström’s son, the engineer of the same name, followed in his father’s footsteps and was fascinated with the properties of Masonite. In the 50s, he started his own board-processing factory in Eklången, just outside of Eskilstuna. The old warehouse of this old Eklången factory held a few well-preserved, original hardboards from the mid-50s of varying colour, surface structure, thickness and perforation. Per Wikström wanted to know if we would be interested in using these boards. We arranged to meet him and excited we went to the warehouse to take a look. Among the boards, we found Masonite leatherboard that were manufactured in Rundvik during the mid-50s upon the initiative of Carl Wikström. Special cylinders with leather patterns had been designed for the steam press in the Rundvik factory. The board was used for items such as dados, bevelled and coloured mouldings to disguise joints. The Masonite was spray-painted at first, and would later be curtain coated whereas the leatherboard would be roller coated in a second shade to create depth. Manufacture of the classic, perforated boards also started in the 50s. When metal hooks were attached in the holes, shelves as well as tools could be mounted upon them. The perforated Masonite hardboards that were mainly delivered by Carl Wikström to hardware stores were a product that stuck around for a long time and were challenged by similar makes.

Based on these original boards from the 1930s and 50s and those very last boards produced at the factory in April of 2011, we now design the unique cabinets. Each cabinet is a collage of Masonite from different time periods and a memorial monument to the last of the Masonite factories that is now sadly being closed down.

How come we chose to collaborate with Svenskt Tenn and in addition, work with material that is more than 80 years old? Perhaps we were looking for something timeless, something original and durable – a subtle criticism of the constant quest for the next new thing. Above all, the cabinets constitute an attempt to make peo-
People see that production and craftsmanship is rapidly disappearing from Sweden. Svenskt Tenn is one of the few furniture and design companies in Sweden that were around at the time when the Masonite factory was started and that is still here. Estrid Ericson founded Svenskt Tenn back in 1924. The furniture of Josef Frank does not fit the clean, strict and functional design in which Masonite is a common feature. Perhaps this is where the real challenge lies: in using the last Masonite boards, the material of modernism, for Svenskt Tenn – to challenge, in terms of material choice, the precious woods preferred by Josef Frank. In his opinion, the long legs of his furniture were important in order to allow the eye to see both the floor and wall behind the piece. This idea has been our inspiration when creating the new cabinets.

There is also something alluring in investigating the way Josef Frank questioned the uniformity of modernism and was not afraid to utilise décor and patterns. He was a defender of pluralism and embracing individual expression. In his opinion, the best thing about the age of machines was the possible freedom it entailed. He would also emphasise the importance of craftsmanship – a subject that seems as relevant today as it was then.

All the human encounters we had at the Masonite factory were amazingly inspirational. Ever since we scattered those first flowers, we have kept returning to Rundvik. We wanted to show the people behind the production of the boards and put the place, the craftsmanship and the industrial manufacturing processes in the spotlight. For the same reasons, it is also interesting in this context to mention another important collaboration notably that of Estrid Ericson and Josef Frank and how together they managed to create a functioning form of artistic expression. That two people in collaboration can draw out aspects of one another that each, on their own, would not dare exhibit.

— This memory fragment was written down in April, 2012
Masonite Memoriam
2011

Produced exclusively for legendary Swedish manufacturer Svenskt Tenn, Masonite Memoriam is an artful experiment of masonite’s abilities, challenging our conception of the suitability of material. With recovered masonite from 1929, in combination with the last Masonite boards that were made at the factory in April 2011, the duo produced a limited number of cabinets.

Cabinet with black and white doors,
original Masonite hardboard from 1929 and 1950.
Edition of 4. H1500 W700 D350 mm

Cabinet with green doors,
original Masonite hardboard from 1929 and 1950.
Edition of 4. H1500 W700 D350 mm
Cabinet with red doors, original Masonite hardboard from 1929 and 1950. Edition of 4. H1500 W700 D350 mm


Cabinet with 9 drawers, original Masonite hardboard from 1929 and 1950. Edition of 4. H1270 W850 D310 mm

The hardboard range was hand made by Folkform at the factory in Rundvik. By combining the wood fibres with other organic material it was possible to give this down to earth material an entirely new look. Natural flowers and butterflies have been inserted into the huge Masonite presses to create a permanent organic decoration. The Masonite hardboard factory was located in the north of Sweden in Västerbotten where the professional experience of processing wood spans over generations in places such as Sorsele, Burträsk and Vännäs.

The hardboard material was made out of the left over sawdust from the sawmills in the area.
Real flowers were placed on the Masonite pulp.

The huge Masonite press. By combining wood-fibre with organic materials under high pressure it has been possible to give this down to earth material an entirely new look.
The Collectors  
2008

For this furniture range from 2008 Folkform invited collectors to take part in the design process. Each piece is a one-off, made from a donated herbarium or insect from the collector’s collection. The donated specimens have been added to wet chipboard, so when pressed, a permanent organic decoration is embedded into the masonite hardboard.

FROM LEFT – Forest Cupboard, Masonite hardboard, Torbjorn Peterson’s collection of natural forest plants, birch wood.
W460 H1200 D280 mm

Sea Cupboard, Alfred Sandström’s collection of real plants from the Baltic sea, Masonite hardboard, birch wood.
W460 H1200 D280 mm

Meadow Cupboard, Masonite hard board, 32 real butterflies from Adam Stech’s collection, birch wood. W460 H1200 D280 mm
Unique Standard
2010

New interpretations of today’s standard materials.

Masonite Cabinet with 18 drawers, linseed oiled Masonite.
Edition of 10. H1650 W1000 D330 mm
The Glass Factory
Okrouhlice

Inspired by old glassworks from the Czech countryside, the collection Industrial Intervention, designed in 2011, explores the collision between mass-produced and handmade articles. Folkform invited Maxim Velcovský, one of the Czech Republic’s foremost contemporary designers, to participate in a series of material experiments with glass and porcelain to investigate traditional Czech handicraft techniques.
The road trip

This series of Crystal vases started off with a road trip to the old glassworks in the Czech countryside in 2011. We remember the first stop was the factory in Harrachov known for its tradition of hand cutting of crystal glass. The owner of the factory met us at the entrance and his son showed us around the glass works. It was busy with all the glass blowers inside, lots of sweaty people carrying crystal glasses everywhere, it was quite dark in the workshop space but the orange flames from the molten glass ovens were as intense as the heat inside.

Glass cutting decoration by hand

The son of the owner showed us the cutting workshop, only one person cuts the crystal glass nowadays, the noise from the cutting blade was distracting. The space of the cutting workshop felt almost like a museum with cutting tools covering the walls and huge cut crystal vases standing on the shelves. They also had a small museum collection of glass pieces manufactured in Harrachov covering works from the 18th century to the present day. We managed to borrow three crystal vases from the thirties and fifties from their collection and that became the starting point and inspiration for our new work. The old crystal patterns were beautiful, but at the same time overwhelming, because they were so extreme in their expression. The crystal cutting techniques created a brilliant sparkling effect as each cut reflected and transmitted light through the glass vases on the shelf in the workshop. How could these traditional cutting patterns be combined in new ways to create new expression?

Glass cutting decoration by robot

The next stop on the road trip was an industry working with glass cutting decoration made with robot-cutting, the building was very modern, we had coffee together with the owner and he showed us different samples of advanced cutting techniques, completely new patterns could be made using advanced technology and a glass cutting robot called Jack. It all appeared very simple, but later on we were to realise it was more difficult than we expected to work with the cutting robot. Throughout the journey we formulated the starting point for the new glass series and we aimed to explore the collision between the mass-produced and the handmade articles. To perform a series of Industrial Interventions where crafts meet industry, where the machine meets the hand. Can something be created when traditional handicraft is incorporated into existing industrial manufacturing processes? The outcome of the experiments was going to be presented at an exhibition at Färgfabriken Center for Contemporary art in Stockholm.

Four months later Chandra was driving back from Stockholm to Prague and the
Bohemia Machine factory with 7 hand blown vases from Sweden to create the glass cutting experiments and to make the final documentation of the manufacturing process together with a photographer.

First one layer of pattern was cut by hand and slightly tilted, then another layer of the pattern was cut by machine, to play with perception and the prisms in the glass, and challenge the machine-made with the hand-made. Anna was still in Sweden preparing for the upcoming exhibition at Färgfabriken Center for contemporary art. Chandra called me frequently to tell me how the project developed. During the experiments four of the vases broke while cutting and there was nothing Anna could do apart from try to keep calm, and prepare for the exhibition design and write the exhibition catalogue entitled *Industrial Intervention*.

**The exhibition at Färgfabriken**

We remember it was early morning the day before the opening when Chandra arrived in Stockholm again after 18 hours of driving from Prague with the three final crystal vases in the car. Sleeping in the back of the car were our photographer and the glass artist Maxim Velcovsky who we invited to collaborate in the exhibition at Färgfabriken.

The gallery space was light and beautiful but we blocked out the daylight and tried to create a scenography of the glass factory in the gallery, with real tools, and pictures from the workshop. We also made a video of the hand cut glass looping in parallel with the machine cut. When the first guests entered the space, music by Raymond Scott and Manhattan Research Inc blasted loudly around the gallery.3

---

3 This memory fragment was written down in January, 2016
Glass blowing workshop Moser.

Folkform talking to artisans at Bohemia Crystal.

The walls of the old workshop in Harrachov are filled with grinding tools.
The robot is cutting glass in a glass cutting automat. Glass cutting decoration without the presence of the hand.

The vases are still cut by hand at Crystal glamour.

Glass cutting workshop in Harrachov in the 60s, today only one glass cutter is active in the workshop.
Industrial Intervention
2011

The pieces explore the collision between mass-produced and handmade articles, where crafts meet industry and the machine meets the hand.

Industrial Intervention Vase,
cut both by machine and hand. Unique piece.
H330 W170 D170 mm
Industrial Intervention Vase,
cut both by machine and hand. Unique piece.
H350 W170 D170 mm
Feeling highly connected to the Swedish artisan heritage, the duo has throughout their career spent time in craftsmen’s workshops across Sweden. Inspired by time spent at metal workshops, a collection of brass objects were designed for Skultuna, a Swedish producer of fine metal objects.

The very first prototypes were made at Rosengrens, a brass foundry in Limhamn, situated about 5 km outside of Malmö on the south coast of Sweden.
Malmö was covered in fog when we landed at Sturups Airport. We remember the flight was late. It was the first time we visited Rosengren Metal foundry, outside of Malmö. The foundry was mostly casting small bronze birds for gravestones and sculptures by local artists. Working with brass as a material was not something they usually did, but they promised to make an exception and give it a try, so we arranged to stay two days at their workshop and take part in the moulding process when the first prototypes of the candleholders were made. The entry to the foundry was anonymous, a simple looking building built in corrugated steel. Outside dusty metal parts were lying everywhere.

We passed the hallway and went up the staircase to the meeting room on the top floor, we sat down at the table and began to discuss the process of the moulding that was going to happen during the afternoon, the owner presented different metal samples and objects he had made earlier for clients, everything from small metal awards, to signs and letters and birds for gravestones.

The heat was intense towards the skin. The sand in the mould was slightly orange and oily. It was striking that each sand form was unique and was only going to be used once, knowing all the craft that was put into making this form. It was also fascinating that we were using the same old casting technique as 1000 years ago. Nothing had changed.

The sand was shaping the melting metal to become the candleholder. In that moment it felt as if the burning hot orange metal was a living creature giving life to our design of the candleholder when it slowly left the moulding tool and reached the sand form.

The first sketch we made, we threw in the dustbin, as usual we were too hard in our judgements towards our own work. Chandra picked up the sketch from the bin and was convinced that we should develop it further. We made a series of paper models and prototypes in wood to find the right proportions, where the simple tea lights were put side by side with more prestigious types of candles to create a collage of different candles usually not put together in the same design.

About six months later we put on a small display of our work at the Pascal gallery on Humlegårdsgatan in Stockholm, at that time one of the few galleries in Stockholm working with art and design. Only one candleholder arrived in time for the opening of the exhibition, Rosengrens was very slow in delivering the pieces, but luckily enough we had also made a series candle holders in walnut wood. The second time we exhibited this work was in February during the Stockholm fur-
Our first furniture fair at Whyred on Mäster Samuelsgatan in Stockholm. This time we had more time for preparations. We ordered 50 candleholders in bronze and brass from Rosengrens Metall foundry, to make a limited edition series. We signed and numbered each piece, but only three arrived for the opening. At the exhibition we tried to introduce the audience to the handcraft behind the manufacturing of each piece and to make the manufacturing process visible and transparent. We titled the exhibition Hand Made Mass production and we rebuilt a scenography from the Rosengren foundry. We exhibited big photographs from the foundry workshop and also brought back fragments from the foundry to Stockholm, such as tools and a sand mould together with the candleholders.

After the opening there was a long waiting list for people eager to buy the candleholders in brass and bronze, but it was almost impossible to get these delivered from Rosengrens on time. We remember calling the foundry almost every day trying to speed up the manufacturing process. One of the reasons why the delivery was late was because the craftsman polishing the pieces was not able to deliver due to a drinking problem, we were told by the owner of the foundry, and he was one of the few people who had the necessary skills in the Malmö area.

We kept on our small scale self production for about six months. Then came a phone call from Skultuna, a Swedish company that had been working with brass for generations and were now in the process of renewing the brand.

Skultuna invited us to collaborate and since then the Collage Candle holder has been produced by Skultuna. But we have still kept a limited edition version in bronze and the production at Rosengrens. We have talked to the owner of the foundry on the phone almost every month since then. We have become friends now, discussing life and developing new ideas.4

— This memory fragment was written down in March, 2016
For each casting, a new sand mould is made. Much of the equipment reminds us of glorious days now gone; the casting technique has not changed for 1000 years.

The solid brass is heated up to a temperature of 900°C.

The Candle holder just casted.
Candle Collage
2010

Each piece comprises a candelabra, simple tea lights, pillar candles and hand-crafted votives to create a landscape of candle typologies.

Candle collage, brass, by Skultuna
H155 W340 D110 mm
The Brass Foundry

Candle Collage, bronze
Edition of 25. H155 W340 D10 mm

Bronze Cabinet, casted bronze
H900 W700 D350 mm

Production Novellas
In collaboration with the lamp factory in Örsjö Folkform presents a series of new fittings where they examine the opportunities of the metallic colour palette, from highly polished brass to oxidised copper. Örsjö Belysning is situated in the south-east corner of Småland in a well-known area cluster of many producers. Örsjö Industri was founded in 1948 by Simon Jonsson, Sture Jonsson and Edvin Thorén. From start operations concerned manufacture of metal components, including contact pins for Televerket.
Örsjö is located in the south east corner of Småland, in Sweden
Suburban Skyline
2011

The lamp is inspired by the architecture of different suburban districts of Stockholm.

Suburban Skyline pendant, brass
H440 W500 D500 mm

Suburban Skyline floor, brass
H1700 W500 D500 mm
The wood workshop in Vrena, is located about 20 km outside of Nyköping. Eriksson & Söner Cabinet Makers combines high technology with a craftsmanship matched by few. In the centuries-old building, you might see 82 year old Åke Larsson making one of Folkform's Revolving Book cases. This is also a procedure that requires great skill in all stages - crafting one single book case can take almost an entire working week.
The revolving bookcases are manufactured by the cabinet makers in Vrena
The bookcases are a new interpretation of traditional revolving bookcases, these often featuring three or four levels with larger volumes being stored at the bottom. Folkform believe, that in this time of increased digitalisation of texts, the book as a physical object will become increasingly desirable and that the reader will prefer a smaller number of well chosen volumes housed in a beautiful piece of furniture to a large number of books in a wall-to-wall bookcase.

Revolving Bookcases
2016

Archiver
H 490 W 250 D 250

Revolving Bookcase
H 560 x W 430 D 430

Revolving Bookcase
H 1300 W 400 D 400
The Leather Tannery
Tärnsjö

Tärnsjö leather Tannery established in 1857, built on the edge of Tärnsjö lake. In this range of furniture different types of leather are combined in the same bench.

For this collection developed exclusively for Skandium, Folkform was exploring different Tärnsjö leathers and traditional leather upholstery methods.

Tärnsjö leather tannery, close to the Tärnsjö lake, north of Uppsala.
The tanning process, a production system using organic-based tannins found in bark extracts.
Different leather upholstery methods are combined in the same bench.
The Patchwork Leather Benches.
We believe in a dynamic collision between the mass produced and the handmade article, where crafts meet industry and the machine meets the hand.

How can we create new expressions by combining the handmade surface with the machine cut? Can something new be created when traditional handicraft is combined with an existing industrial manufacturing process? The glass pieces are a result of both traditional hand-cutting techniques and high-tech cutting by robot combined in the same vase.

Despite long traditions, the Swedish glass manufacturing industry is fading. As recent as May 2011, Orrefors closed down its glass cutting workshop. The glassworks of Orrefors and Kosta Boda may in many aspects symbolize the old and traditional within Swedish glassware.

The old craft techniques of cutting glass in Sweden are threatened to disappear. What will happen when they do? Will the production move somewhere else? Will it come down to everything being about the brand?

We want our products to carry the spirit and history of the place where they are produced with them. When manufacturing is moved to foreign countries, it becomes very abstract and people stop appreciating the value of the craft behind it. We want to tell the entire story of how the product was made, and by whom. That is the key to the narrative of the pieces.
...On materials
In our work we are interested in the hierarchies that we bestow on materials and like to question how we apply value to things. Trying to combine high and low culture. We are constantly experimenting with materials.

...On inspiration
Inspiration comes from the everyday, but in many of our projects we make interventions of old forgotten industrial processes and manufacturing techniques.

...On Crafts
Somehow we have a crafts-based approach to our work, a kind of primitive starting point. It is not always necessary to have the latest technology to achieve the most exciting new products.

...On manufacturing
When manufacturing is moved to foreign countries, it becomes very abstract and you stop appreciating the value of the craft behind it. We want to tell the entire story of the production of our glass pieces, the places and the people who make them.

...On the studio
The starting point for our venture with Folkform has been to personally create a platform with the freedom to experiment and work by exploration and crossing the boundaries. It has been about the freedom to create what we thought was lacking when we left school. The traditional furniture industry is slow and conservative. So we have always tried to find new ways of reaching out with our products. For us, education is an important part of design practice. When we teach we always try to encourage our students to be creative even in the shaping of their own professional role, and not get caught up in the set standards of what a profession is or should be. It is important to find your own approach and your own voice.
Folkform

The art and design-duo Folkform was founded in 2005 and consists of Anna Holmquist and Chandra Ahlsell. They first entered the public spotlight with their experimental work with materials, especially Masonite where flowers and plants are pressed into the boards – giving them a brand new expression.

Folkform has also become an international name and has received several prestigious design awards. Their work can be found in the permanent design exhibition at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm and in The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo, to mention a few places.

Anna Holmquist
Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden

Chandra Ahlsell
Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden

Educational background
Chandra Ahlsell:
Pratt Institute of Design, New York.
Konstfack College of Art, Stockholm.
Anna Holmquist :
Goldsmiths College of Art, London.
Konstfack College of Art, Stockholm.

Museum and Public Collections
Swedish National Art Museum, Marble Cabinet.
Private collections: France, Sweden and Norway.

Awards (selected)
Lauritz ICON Award 2016
Residence Form Award 2016
Future Design Days Award, (Sweden) 2006
Golden Chair Award Nomination 2007
Swedish Design Award Nomination, product design 2008

Exhibitions (selected)
2017
Design to Last, The Architecture and Design Centre, Stockholm

2016
Now You Are at the Beginning Again, Rönnells

2014
The Scale of Things, La Pelota, Milan

2013
Cabinets with Stripes, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm
Et Tu Trà, Artipelag, Stockholm

2012
Masonite Memoria, Svenskt Tenn, Stockholm.
Copper in a Box, Musée des arts et métiers, Paris.

2011
Industrial Intervention, Färgfabriken Center for Art and Architecture, Stockholm.
Handmade Mass-production, Whyred Art Projects.
Statement, Boda glassfactory, Boda, Sweden.
Contemporary Swedish Design/Hemma, Swedish Embassy, London.

2010
Candle Collages, Gallery Pascale, Stockholm.
The Collectors Bensimon gallery, Paris.

2009
Escapes, Mint, London.

2008
Unique Standard, Crystal Palace Contemporary Art, Stockholm.
Experimenta Design Biennale, Westerhuis Gallery, Amsterdam.
Forget Me Nok, Mint Gallery, London.
Material Merge Collection, Design Blok, Prague.
Nord Style, Design Mai, Berlin, Germany.

2007
Modern Times, Salone Satellite, Milan.
Averati, A Dream Come True, Milan.

2006
Material Merge, Future Design Days Award exhibition, Stockholm.

2005
Designers Block, Milan.
Folkform

COLLABORATORS

**Svenskt Tenn**
Svenskt Tenn was founded in 1924 by designer and art teacher Estrid Ericson (1894-1981). In 1934, she initiated what would be a life-long collaboration with Josef Frank, who was already a famous architect, urban planner and designer. He had recently left Austria to settle down in Sweden. Together the two of them created the foundation of the design philosophy that Svenskt Tenn would come to represent. The combination of the artistic nature and productivity of Estrid Ericson with the timeless designs of Josef Frank soon proved to be a recipe for success.

Svenskt Tenn is owned by the Kjell and Märta Beijer Foundation.

**Skandium**
Skandium is a British company, founded in 1999 by three Scandinavians. The aim is to be the best retailer of Scandinavian design & furniture in the world, giving customers a wide product choice while being served by knowledgeable staff in a wellpresented environment. The family of stores in London consists of two Skandium stores, a Skandium concession in the department store Selfridges, a Republic of Fritz Hansen store and an online store. Skandium also does wholesale to other retailers, contract sales for commercial projects and interior design for private clients.

Skandium is exclusive agent in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland for the design brands Arabia, Asplund, Design House Stockholm, Hackman, Havi, iittala, Le Klint, lineal, Marimekko, Rosendahl AJ clocks and Woodnotes.

About the founders: Magnus Englund (Managing Director) is Swedish with a background in fashion wholesale and retailing. He is the author of two best-selling books on Scandinavian design. Chrystina Schmidt (Creative Director) is Finnish and previously worked as a fashion and life style photographer through her own studio. She is a product designer and interior designer as well as the creative leader of Skandium. Christopher Seidenfaden (Non-Executive Director) is Danish with a background in business journalism and finances. His family built up the Danish lighting manufacturer Louis Poulsen, famous for the PH lamps.

**Skultuna**
Skultuna produces interior design items in brass designed by leading designers like Folkform, Richard Hutten, Luca Nichetto and CKR. Skultuna was founded in the year 1607 by King Karl IX of Sweden in the small village of Skultuna, Sweden. For over 400 years Skultuna has produced objects in brass and metal of the highest quality, always with that same sense of timeless design. Today Skultuna prides itself as a Royal Warrant holder with an appointment to His Majesty The King of Sweden.

Dahl Agenturer
Dahl Agenturer functions as a creative bridge between the architect and the manufacturer. With over 40 years of experience from the wonderful world of carpets we have contributed with both knowledge and products in many great interior projects; offices, hotels, retail, private homes and such. The heart and soul of our business are carpets but we also work with lightning, furniture and accessories.

5-vie Art + Design
Is a non-profit cultural association which aims at drawing attention to art and design and is curating an exhibition by selected designers in Milan Old Town during Milan Design week.
1) The concept of the Production Novella (Folkform 2014) has also been developed as a narrative method in artistic research and borrows inspiration from Livholt’s (2015) untimely academic novella writing which includes diverse writing strategies and visual representations such as writing memories and letters, research poetry and photography.


2. The novella writing on the Last of the Hardboards (Folkform 2012) has been used as a case study in design research (Holmquist et al) and published during the conference Innovation through tradition. For further reading: Holmquist, A. Magnusson, M. Livholts, M (2017). The shaping of dissonance in craft-based innovation - exploring the combinations of novelty and tradition, will be in the proceedings of DMA, conference in Hongkong 2017.

3. The novella about the Glass factory (Folkform 2013) has also been used as a case study in design research exploring material dissonance in art and design practice. (Holmquist et al 2017) Holmquist, A. Magnusson, M. Livholts, M (2017). The shaping of dissonance in craft-based innovation - exploring the combinations of novelty and tradition, will be in the proceedings of DMA, conference in Hongkong 2017.

4. The novella about the brass foundry (Folkform 2016) was used as a case study in the design research article by Holmquist, A. Magnusson, M. Livholts, M (2017). The shaping of dissonance in craft-based innovation - exploring the combinations of novelty and tradition, will be in the proceedings of DMA, conference in Hongkong 2017.
Photography:
Andrea Johnson,
Alexander Lagergren,
Emma Nilsson,
Erik Wåhlström

Graphic design, art direction and production of this catalogue:
Martin Frostner, Stefan Engblom,
Mikael Sundblad and Folkform

Printed by Printfabriken, Sweden 2017.

Special thanks to:
Swedish Arts Grants Committee
Swedish Society of Crafts and Design, Viktor Blomqvist, Tommy Bindefeldt, Andrea Johnson, Dahl Agenturer, 5vie Art + Design

For further details on any of the products in the catalogue please see the website of the individual brands or contact info@folkform.se
More information on Folkform work, visit www.folkform.se