

Press release  
Cologne/Frankenberg, October 2018

## **It's all about communication: The Thonet trade fair presentation at Orgatec 2018 Residential scenarios for a new working world meet industrial-style loft atmosphere, created by PLY Atelier**

**The roots of Thonet are grounded in the furnishing of 19th century coffee houses. Today, offices can be compared with the former coffee houses, according to architect Gregor Eichinger. And this is where Thonet is right at home – back then as well as today. It's a place where more happens than just sitting at a fixed workstation. It's a place where you temporarily live, where mobility, flexibility and, of course, direct and digital communication play a decisive role. It's all about communication: the new forms of working transform spaces into "living offices" where flexible scenarios are desired. The furnishing of modern, contemporary offices has become an issue related to the design of communication and the quality of the stay – and Thonet supplies the corresponding solutions.**

### **The theme: It's all about communication**

Large spaces that become working zones, co-working spaces, in which people from different companies and worlds work together: today, "office" usually means a space that meets many different needs and requirements. For these issues, Thonet provides answers that stimulate the design of communicative processes in a contemporary way and make the office an inviting place to stay. The Thonet trade fair booth at Orgatec represents all of the communication scenarios that play a role in offices. Thonet designs these spaces and situations with furniture that provides an incomparable quality of materials and processing and, due to their sophisticated craftsmanship, create landscapes in carefully curated colour schemes reaching far beyond pure functionality.

The communication theme is clarified through classic and existing ranges, some shown in new versions, including an update of the seating furniture series 404 by Stefan Diez for cafés, cafeterias, and informal locations, as well as the sofa range S 5000 by James Irvine for waiting and lounge areas. Exciting new products also deal with communication: The conference table 1500 by Wolfgang C.R. Mezger in two heights establishes transitions between standing and sitting, and the new small armchair 809 by formstelle, matching the lounge chair 808, invites users to stay for a while and engage in discussions. The chair range S 160 by Delphin Design, which has successfully served as auditorium seating for many years, also gets a special staging: In addition to updated material versions, the brand new version S 260 is now available. With its innovative linking mechanism (DIN 14703) and its space-saving A-stackability, it develops additional areas of use for Thonet.

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## **The trade fair booth: a strong presentation stage with an industrial style, associations with Thonet history**

Shiny metal everywhere, from hot-galvanised sheet metal on the bottom to semi-transparent metal partition walls made of expanded metal that almost look spherical: the trade fair booth designed by the architectural office PLY Atelier, Hamburg, banks on raw, untreated materials. A sophisticated play of reflections and semi-transparency makes the booth multi-faceted and complex. Daniel Schöning, PLY Atelier, says: "With the Thonet booth we wanted to create a space that highlights atmosphere, not a simulation of real office worlds, so that you take an even closer look at the exhibits. This abstract production provides the furniture with an extraordinary presence and makes all of their qualities visible."

Another theme at the trade fair booth is the use of former industrial spaces as modern working worlds – catchword "conversion". The trade fair booth presents strong visual associations with its luxurious industrial look, reminding us that Thonet invented industrial furniture design in the 19th century. In the 1930s, it was again Thonet that discovered the potential of the innovative material tubular steel for industrial furniture manufacturing and realised the designs of the Bauhaus designers Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, and Mart Stam. Homage is paid to this achievement with two several meter-high tubular steel shelves that provide the classics with a display on their two narrow sides.

In the suggestive loft atmosphere of the Orgatec trade fair booth Thonet demonstrates what the company, with its almost 200 year-long tradition, is especially good at: creating interior design landscapes that are functional and intelligently designed, and that add culture to any environment. Thonet is history in every product – for 200 years, the company has been creating durable products of lasting value with the potential to become classics.

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We would appreciate an author's copy in the case of publication.

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## ***Thonet – future-oriented furniture design with a long tradition***

*The unique success story of Thonet began with the work of master carpenter Michael Thonet. Since establishing his first workshop in Boppard on the River Rhine in 1819, the name Thonet has stood for high-quality, innovative and elegant furniture. The breakthrough came with the iconic chair No. 14, the so-called Vienna Coffee House Chair: the pioneering technique of bending solid beech wood for the first time enabled the mass production of chairs. The second milestone in design history was the tubular steel furniture by the famous Bauhaus architects Mart Stam, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer in the 1930s. At the time, Thonet was the world's largest producer of these tubular steel furniture designs, which are considered timeless today.*

*For the company today, the continuous process of innovation stands in the foreground alongside a focus on tradition and fine craftsmanship. Thonet collaborates with renowned national and international designers – in addition, some of the furniture is designed by the in-house Thonet Design Team. All of the furniture is produced in the company-owned manufacturing facility, and, following the motto "Individuality is our standard", custom-tailored solutions are part of everyday life in Frankenberg. Chief Executive Officer Brian Boyd together with Chief Operating Officer Michael Erdelt and Creative Director Norbert Ruf manage the company at the corporate head offices and production site in Frankenberg/Eder (Germany). The descendants of Michael Thonet, the fifth and sixth generations, are actively involved with the company's business as partners and sales representatives.*