

Press release
Frankenberg, January 2019

Café Thonet: a trade fair presentation celebrating 200 years of corporate history Contemporary since 1819: the trade fair booth at imm cologne 2019 designed by Studio Besau Marguerre combines bentwood and tubular steel, history and the present, and turns the DNA of the Thonet brand into unique experiences.

Welcome to Café Thonet – designed by Studio Besau Marguerre! Expansive, generous ceiling to floor curtains demarcate a larger outer and smaller inner circle at the imm cologne trade fair booth. Interrupted by openings, circular textile walls define special spaces that set the stage for contemporary and iconic classics from two centuries of furniture design in Thonet’s big anniversary year 2019. The company headquartered in Frankenberg in the German state of Hesse is celebrating its 200th anniversary and, as part of its corporate history, the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus as well.

The picture of the “café” develops several levels of meaning at once. First, the coffee house has always been a place for communication. Eating, drinking, retreating, and working: today, living and working both still take place in cafés. It is therefore a symbol of what Thonet is especially good at: designing successful furniture for communication. Whether long evenings or short visits, spontaneous or long-planned, at the dining table, in hotels or at meetings: we get together on Thonet.

Second, the success story of Thonet had its very real beginnings in the 19th century coffee houses. It makes sense to present the famous bentwood icons in a place that quotes this tradition in the big anniversary year. It is only logical that visitors will find a café in the centre of the booth and is evidence of the harmonious overall concept.

The tubular steel classics from the Bauhaus era are also integrated in the Café Thonet, which was inspired by Mies van der Rohe’s and Lilly Reich’s “Café Samt und Seide” (“Velvet and Silk Café”) from 1927. The Café Thonet combines the two most important innovations that are closely connected to the Thonet brand.

New products complete the presentation: the re-edition and interpretation of the side table series MR 515 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and a new colour concept for the iconic Coffee House Chair 214, both by Studio Besau Marguerre, are introduced to the public. In addition, the Atelier swivel chair version of the S 64 by Marcel Breuer is on display. New bar stool versions and additions to the successful chair range 118 by Sebastian Herkner, including a bar chair version and a residential dining or meeting table designed by Wolfgang Mezger, round off the trade fair presentation.

Coffee house tradition, “Velvet and Silk Café”, 200 years of Thonet: inspirations

The café is situated at the centre of the trade fair booth with an inviting round bar. It is surrounded by a first textile circle made of a light-grey opaque fabric that is, however, interrupted and offers access from all directions. A calm, intimate atmosphere is found at the café. A second, semi-transparent circle in beige embraces the inner circle. The doubling of the circular “walls” creates almost museum-like corridors. The space between the two layers of fabric tells focused history: icons from all eras are represented via texts,

graphics, and photos. The outer circle is dedicated to the classic presentation of products, including classics as well as new products.

The opulent curtains of the outer and inner circle are reminiscent of the big era of 19th century coffee houses and, therefore, of the heyday of bentwood furniture made of solid wood, which was invented by Thonet. The designers reinterpreted the once heavy velvet curtains with modern fabrics in discrete colours at Café Thonet. The inner fabric circle in light grey calls forth associations with tubular steel, and the beige of the outer circle is evocative of the bentwood era.

For the concept of the trade fair booth, Eva Marguerre and Marcel Besau focused on providing a platform for the many themes connected with 200 years of Thonet. “Café Thonet creates a transfer of the classic into the contemporary, today,” the designers said. “We wanted to make Thonet’s history visible yet think it forward and inspire people with a topical perspective.” The following was also particularly important for the two designers: “With our very graphic trade fair design we wanted to reference the round shapes that are inseparably connected with Thonet. Bending wood and tubular steel is part of the brand’s history – and we illustrate these curved shapes with our textile walls. By using fabric, we wanted to contrast the Thonet brand, which always has a slightly masculine appeal, with warmth and softness.”

Thonet press contact international

neumann communication
Claudia Neumann, Deike Mlynek, Hannah Knospe
Eigelstein 103-113
50668 Köln
Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 221 – 91 39 49 0
Fax +49 (0) 221 – 91 39 49 19
E-Mail thonet@neumann-communication.de

Thonet GmbH
Susanne Korn
Michael-Thonet-Straße 1
35066 Frankenberg
Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 6451 – 508 160
Fax +49 (0) 6451 – 508 168
E-mail susanne.korn@thonet.de

Thonet press contact in the UK

QuickStep PR
Stephanie Bretherton
Unit 405 United House
North Road
London N7 9DP
United Kingdom
Tel. +44 (0) 20 – 7609 1151
E-mail stephanie@qspr.com

We would appreciate receiving an author’s copy in the event of publication.

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.