

InFocus

Trond Ramsøskar





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Title

Interior Architect MNIL, Partner

Company

Monn Interior Architects, Oslo

Graduation

Kunsthøyskolen Oslo, 1998

Creative by mind

As a young teenager, Trond had a creative mind. He was dreaming of becoming a photographer. Despite the dreams, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and began studying economy at Handelshøyskolen BI. He soon realised that this was not right for him, so he needed a new direction.

Trond decided to drop out and attend military service instead, which gave him the opportunity to think about his future and consider his career choice. When his military service was completed, he was certain about his future – he wanted a creative profession. From there, the road to an education as Interior architect was not long.

Colourful hospitality

In his early years after graduation, Trond was mostly involved in projects for private consumers, however, this was a relatively small market. Things took a turn in 2010 when he was given the opportunity to be responsible for the furnishment of Thon Hotel EU in Brussels.

In a great collaboration with Sissel B.H. Thon, Head of Design at Thon Hotels, he dared to challenge the conventional view of business hotels. His idea was simply to do the opposite of what everyone expected – which resulted in a colourful and fun hotel in a market where most people tend to make the safe decision and focus on a tight, solemn, and continental style.

The reason for their choice was simple: In a city like Brussels which is known for its many businesses, the commuting is tiring; long journeys, meetings, and days. Grey surroundings is the last thing hotel guests in Brussels need. They need a sanctuary where they can recharge their batteries in an atmosphere that is playful and relaxed.

The project was a success - and Thon Hotel EU has since been popular amongst the guests and has had a solid position in the market.

Colours work like vitamin pills

People who know Trond or have seen any of the projects he has realised in the past, know that one thing which characterises him is his bold use of colours. His speciality is interiors that trigger energy and joy. *"Colours work like vitamin pills – they boost your energy and counteract monotony."*, he says.

Therefore, it is no surprise to hear his answer, when asked about his dream destinations for inspiration:

"I would love to find inspiration in India - mostly because of the colours, but also due to the contrasts, materials, sounds and the light."

Trond is certain that he would get both professional and personal impulses on a trip to India.

He believes that we are affected by the things we surround ourselves with and that we must create the atmosphere we want to live in – which is exactly what he and his team help their customers do.

Understanding the guest's needs

It is not only his creative mind that is the driving force of Trond. The customer relationships are something he cherishes deeply and are therefore a big motivation for him.

One of the most interesting aspects of his job is getting deep insights by thorough analysis of the customer's needs and expectations. Solving the challenges of a customer and exceeding their expectations is something that gives Trond great satisfaction both professionally and personally.

"High quality service design is the key to good guest experiences.", Trond says. *"The guest experience starts when they enter the main entrance and lasts until they leave the hotel."*





Thon Hotel Rosenkrantz Oslo. Photo: Thon Hotel

The guest experience consists of three defining elements. The first element is expectations, which must be met all the way. The reception needs to be correctly placed, the corridors must have compelling interiors and the signage needs to be clear, so it is easy for the guest to navigate through the hotel.

For the hotel room itself, the understanding of the guest's needs must be so good that all furnishings are perceived as intuitive. The room needs to be easy to use, which means that there must be no doubt where the switches are located, where the cell phone can be charged and where the shoes are placed.

All of this must be well planned and designed in line with the user's needs.

Second, the guest must receive good and efficient service which can only be achieved if you take the employee's work condition into consideration. Cleaning of rooms must be quick and easy, and the consideration of logistics must weigh heavily.

Third, it is important to use the right materials, which means materials that are adapted to the premises' use. Hotels are visited by a lot of people every day which requires durable and solid solutions. As an example, Trond mentions tabletops.

It is important that they can withstand hot cups and not get stained easily. Improper use of materials quickly creates visible wear which ultimately has a negative effect on the aesthetic expression.

When Trond engages in a new project, it is always the needs analysis which is the core of the project. To him, problem solving is part of a designer's DNA. "We must listen to what the customer says, but also try to understand what the customer is not saying", he says. Insight into the customer's underlying problems and challenges is the very basis for good and lasting solutions.

"This is why I believe that the understanding of the end-user is the interior architect's most important skill."

At Monn they have close contact with various segments in the hospitality industry, which is why they know the markets better than most. They have developed an understanding of the priorities and financial limits of different segments and are able to quickly see how unmet needs can be met.

Interaction between materials

When deciding on materials for a project, Trond and his colleagues at Monn have two rooms which are dedicated to materials. It is a space which allows the architects to play with the material mix and create collages where different elements are put together in new and untraditional ways.

Combining different elements in a collage makes it possible to evaluate the materials and see which fit together and which do not. *"When each element is considered in isolation, it is easy to forget that everything must interact."*, Trond says.

A typical collage consists of textile samples, samples of floor coverings / carpets, countertops, tiles for use in a bathroom, colour samples, pictures of furniture, etc. The method is known from the architectural and interior design profession where it is usually used to visualise different ideas in different phases of the design process.

A sustainable mindset

Monn has a high focus on sustainability which is reflected in their choice of materials. They propose solutions which have a long lifespan: a timeless style, durable materials of high quality and simple maintenance routines – all of which contribute to increased sustainability.

These simple principles decrease the need for overly frequent upgrades of the interior. Instead, the interiors can be adjusted with more trend-based elements. Currently green plants and vegetation are popular, but after some time it is something else which represents the 'new and fresh'.

A shift to more 'soft renovations'

When asked about future design trends of the hospitality industry, Trond believes that the demand for sustainable solutions will have an increasingly high focus. The reason for his belief is that a total renovation every five to seven years cannot be justified which is why he predicts that we will see more 'soft renovations' in the future.

"There will be a focus on less trend-sensitive interiors, and a higher replacement of worn elements like furniture and carpets when needed. A simple treatment of surfaces also makes sense compared to a full replacement of elements.", Trond says.



Thon Hotel Oslofjord. Photo: Espen Grønli

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