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DESIGNING MODERN NORWAY

A history of design discourse

KJETIL FALLAN



Designing Modern Norway

Designing Modern Norway: A history of design discourse is an intellectual history of design and its role in configuring the modern Norwegian nation state. Rather than a conventional national design history survey that focuses on designers and objects, this is an in-depth study of the ideologies, organizations, strategies and politics that combined might be said to have ‘designed’ the modern nation’s material and visual culture. The book analyses main tropes and threads in the design discourse generated around key institutions such as museums, organizations and magazines. Beginning with how British and continental design reform ideas were mediated in Norway and merged with a nationalist sentiment in the late nineteenth century, *Designing Modern Norway* traces the tireless and wide-ranging work undertaken by enthusiastic and highly committed design professionals throughout the twentieth century to simultaneously modernise the nation by design and to nationalise modern design. Bringing the discussion up towards the present, the book concludes with an examination of how Norway’s new-found wealth has profoundly changed the production, mediation and consumption of design.

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Designing Modern Norway

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Kjetil Fallan

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Introduction	1
1 Organizing a national design culture	13
2 New nation: institutional visions	31
3 Class and culture: design reform upstairs and downstairs	51
4 Design on the home front	73
5 Reconstructing the nation	95
6 On display: crafting ‘Scandinavian Design’	113
7 Unravelling utopia: the demise of the applied art movement	135
8 Design with care: from consumer activism to environmentalism	157
9 Redesigning discourse: from ardent advocacy to amicable advice	173
Epilogue	187
<i>Bibliography</i>	197
<i>Index</i>	207



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Illustrations

Cover image: Offshore wooden toy set by the Norwegian design studio Permafrost. Commissioned by the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, for the exhibition *New Nordic: Architecture and Identity* (2012). Photo: Johan Holmquist. Courtesy of Permafrost.

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1.1 | Sketch of farm buildings from rural Telemark, by Herman M. Schirmer, 1863. Photo: Frode Larsen. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). | 16 |
| 1.2 | The new building housing the Royal School of Drawing and the Oslo Museum of Decorative Art, inaugurated in 1903/1904. Photo: Anders B. Wilse. Courtesy of Oslo Museum. | 17 |
| 1.3 | Melkeveien (The Milky Way) tapestry. Frida Hansen for Det norske Billedvæveri, 1898. Courtesy of Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. | 23 |
| 1.4 | Filigree silver and enamel jardiniere in the shape of a miniature Viking ship. Marius Hammer, c. 1900. Photo: Annar Bjørgli. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). | 27 |
| 2.1 | Englekor (Angel Choir), tapestry. Oluf Wold-Torne for The Norwegian Home Craft Association (Den norske husflidsforening), 1914. Photo: Dag Andre Ivarsøy. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). | 37 |
| 2.2 | Night view of illuminated main buildings at <i>The Jubilee Exhibition</i> , 1914. Courtesy of Oslo Museum. | 38 |
| 2.3 | Interior from the 'Foodstuffs' hall in the Industry Section at <i>The Jubilee Exhibition</i> , 1914. Courtesy of Oslo Museum. | 40 |
| 2.4 | Coffee set in silver and bakelite. Jacob T. Prytz for J. Tostrup, c. 1930. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). | 44 |
| 3.1 | Cover of <i>Brukskunst</i> , January 1932. Cover design by Ruth Arnestad and Nora Gulbrandsen. Photo by the author. | 55 |
| 3.2 | Cover of <i>Hus og Have</i> , No. 2, 1933. Photo by the author. | 60 |
| 3.3 | Cover of <i>Vi selv og våre hjem</i> , February 1935. Cover design by Arne Korsmo. Photo by the author. | 62 |
| 3.4 | Photo taken by Nanna Broch during one of her many housing inspections in the working-class east end of Oslo in the 1920s. | |

- The image shows two boys in their cramped living quarters, the back room of a shop. Photo: Nanna Broch. Courtesy of Norsk Folkemuseum. 64
- 4.1 Cover of the very first issue of *Bonytt*, January 1941. The image shows the interior of a house by the architect Knut Knutsen. Photo by the author. 78
- 4.2 Plate in glazed pottery. Jens von der Lippe, 1947. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). 83
- 4.3 Grouse figurine hand-carved from whale tusk. Arne Tjomsland, 1958. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). 87
- 4.4 Jens von der Lippe in his studio, 1963. Photo: Atelier Rude. Courtesy of Oslo Museum. 89
- 5.1 Dessert dish from the Sola pressed glass service. Sverre Pettersen for Hadeland glassverk, 1938. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (CC-BY-NC). 97
- 5.2 From an exhibition organized by the Applied Art Association in Trondheim in 1948 in one of the new apartment buildings planned by Trondheim Cooperative Housing Association (Trondheim og omegn boligbyggelag) at Persaunet, Trondheim. Photo: Schröder. Courtesy of Sverresborg Trøndelag Folkemuseum. 103
- 5.3 Bedroom interior and furniture. Bernt Heiberg, c. 1950. Photo: Teigens Fotoatelier. Courtesy of Norsk Teknisk Museum (CC-BY). 106
- 5.4 Coffee kettle in anodized aluminium. Thorbjørn Rygh, 1951/59. Photo: Wolday, Mekonnen. Courtesy of Holmestrand Aluminium Museum (CC-BY-SA). 107
- 6.1 Norway's exhibition at the *X Triennale di Milano* in 1954. The custom-made herring table with accessories by Grete Prytz and Arne Korsmo is seen in the foreground. Korsmo was awarded a Grand Prix for his exhibition design. Photo courtesy of Archivio Fotografico © *La Triennale di Milano*. 119
- 6.2 'Sector B' of the Norwegian section at the *XI Triennale di Milano* in 1957, organized by ID-gruppen. Exhibition design by Bjørn Engø. Photo courtesy of Archivio Fotografico © *La Triennale di Milano*. 122
- 6.3 View of Norway's 'Sector A' at the *XI Triennale di Milano*. Note the silver bowls placed high overhead in the 'birdcage' structure. Photo courtesy of Archivio Fotografico © *La Triennale di Milano*. 124
- 6.4 The Norwegian exhibition at the *XII Triennale di Milano* in 1960. Exhibition design: Odd Brochmann. Photo courtesy of Archivio Fotografico © *La Triennale di Milano*. 126
- 7.1 Grapnel SAV (malleable cast iron). Kåre Espedal for Sandnes Aducerverk A/S, 1957. Photo: Bjørn Winsnes. Courtesy of Norsk design- og arkitektursenter (CC-BY-NC-SA). 144
- 7.2 Hay loader (steel). Olav Njå for Kvernelands Fabrikk A/S, 1962. Shown at the 1963 exhibition *Norsk/Norwegian Industrial Design* at the Oslo Museum of Decorative Art, and one of five products awarded the Norwegian Design Award for 1964. Photo: Bjørn Winsnes. Courtesy of Norsk design- og arkitektursenter (CC-BY-NC-SA). 146

- 7.3 With 400 dinghy (glass fibre-armed polyester), c. 1960. Bror With for Kristiansand Mekaniske Verksted A/S. One of five products awarded the Norwegian Design Award for 1964; a smaller model, the 200, was shown at the 1963 exhibition *Norsk/Norwegian Industrial Design* at the Oslo Museum of Decorative Art. Photo: Arne Svendsen. Courtesy of Norsk design- og arkitektursenter (CC-BY-NC-SA). 147
- 7.4 Brøyt X3 excavator. Thorbjørn Rygh for Brødrene Søyland A/S, 1964. Fascimile from *Bonytt*, 1965. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 148
- 7.5 The Scandinavian Design coffin being lifted off the roof of the hearse on the quay in front of Oslo City Hall. Photo: Pål Hansen. Courtesy of Pål Hansen alias www.UKRUT.com. 151
- 8.1 Dish w/lid from the Glohane oven-to-table range. Tias Eckhoff for Porsgrunds Porselænsfabrik, 1955. Photo: Anne Hansteen Jarre. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design. 158
- 8.2 Siesta easy chair. Ingmar Relling for Vestlandske Møbelfabrikk A/S, 1965. Photo: Teigens Fotoatelier. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design. 162
- 8.3 Trybo modular system furniture in pine. Edvin Helseth for Trysil Municipal Forest District, 1965. Courtesy of Norsk design- og arkitektursenter (CC-BY-NC-SA). 163
- 8.4 Cover of the book *Fremtiden i våre hender* [*The Future in Our Hands*] by Erik Dammann, first published in 1972. Cover photo by Bjørn Winsnes. Courtesy of Gyldendal Norsk Forlag. 168
- 9.1 Cover of *Bonytt* No. 5, 1966. When the 'Good Design' propaganda still reigned. Featured furniture: 1036 armchair. Alf Sture for Hiorth & Østlyngen, 1941. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 174
- 9.2 Cover of *nye bonytt* No. 7, 1968. Breaking the mould of 'Scandinavian Design'. Featured furniture: plastic-reinforced cardboard furniture. Terje Meyer for Strongpack A/S. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 176
- 9.3 Cover of *nye bonytt* No. 10, 1968. Introducing pop-aesthetics for fashionable interiors. Featured furniture: Uni-Line lounge set. Mona Kinn for Dokka Møbler, 1960s. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 178
- 9.4 Cover of *nye bonytt* No. 1, 1971. Modernism and rationality gave way to traditions and comfort. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 181
- 9.5 Cover of *nye bonytt* No. 3, 1971. DIY material became a favoured way of courting 'ordinary people'. Courtesy of Egmont Publishing. 184



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Introduction

Designing Modern Norway: A History of Design Discourse is an intellectual history of design and its role in configuring a modern nation. It thereby contributes both to a renewed interest in the relations between design culture and national identity in an age of globalization, and to an emerging reappraisal of the history of Scandinavian design. As the subtitle signals, this is not a conventional national design history survey that focuses on designers and objects. Taking its cue from the position that design history is as much a history of ideas as a history of objects,¹ this book is conceived as an in-depth study of the ideologies, organizations, strategies and politics that combined might be said to have ‘designed’ the modern nation’s material and visual culture.

In his proposal for a ‘thing theory’, Bill Brown stressed the temporal and spatial particularity of the meaning of things.² This is of utmost importance to a history of design. The cultural contingency of design should need no elaborate explanation. Its conceptual frameworks and ideological underpinnings are anything but static, but undergo continuous transformations over time. The spatial particularity is equally apparent: even the so-called ‘International Style’ is not particularly international after all, but – as all design – always locally interpreted, adapted and contextualized. Cultural history is sensitive to contextual variations in society, culture and nationality, and a history of Norwegian design is thus inevitably different from (although not incommensurable with or unrelated to) that of other nations.

Designing the modern nation

National frameworks and national narratives have long been a staple of design history writing, as in most other strands of historical scholarship. It has been argued at length elsewhere for the continued, but reconfigured, relevance of national design histories in our age of globalization and increased interest in other scales of analysis.³ Without reiterating this, a few remarks must be made on the reciprocal relationship between design discourse and the modern nation.

First, the historiography of design is rife with biased, selective or heavily ‘curated’ history writing. The modernist bias of much design history, especially in Scandinavia, has produced some surprisingly tenacious myths about national design cultures. As Christina Zetterlund has shown, early modernist missionaries in Sweden and their subsequent chroniclers alike relied on a carefully crafted version of national vernacular traditions to construct a teleological account providing modernism with a pedigree of ‘honest’ design.⁴ Similarly, I have elsewhere argued that the same biases towards

2 Introduction

the sanctioned modernist aesthetic and the domestic context have obscured topics such as ‘traditionalesque’ design, the parallel modernist idiom of streamlining and entire object categories such as military equipment from Norwegian design history.⁵ These examples demonstrate that design history does not only have a history of relating design’s national narratives, but also of shaping those relations and narratives. In other words: design history is designing the nation as well as historicizing it.

The modern nation can be understood as *designed* in several ways. From the large-scale structures of government, economy and infrastructures to the small-scale objects and images of everyday life, processes of design fundamentally shape our experiences of belonging to a national community. How these macro and micro levels are intricately interwoven is eloquently demonstrated by Damon Taylor using as his example the standard British electrical flat three-pin plug, which becomes useless when travelling no further than, for instance, to the nearby Netherlands, where the sockets are made to match a different plug design.⁶ The electrical grid is the example Thomas P. Hughes used to develop his influential theory of ‘large technological systems’, in which the British case illustrated his argument that the modernization of societies has tended to result in a move from regional to national ‘technological styles’.⁷ More than just an inconvenience of modern life, the incompatibility of the British plug and the Dutch socket is, in Taylor’s analysis, evidence of how such mundane material culture is co-produced by, and with, pervasive and deep-seated structures of national government, legislation and technological infrastructure.⁸ The decidedly national scope and character of these structures and systems makes the distinctive British electrical plug a prime example of what Michael Billig has termed ‘banal nationalism’: the many practices and products of everyday life that routinely reproduce national identities and cultures.⁹

In between these macro-level structural designs and the ‘banal nationalism’ of electrical plugs and postage stamps, there are myriad other ways of linking design discourse and the modern nation. Recent design historical writing has explored some of these, but there is a vast terrain still awaiting more fastidious cartographers. One of the more well-covered topics is exhibitions, which in their explicitly visual and material manifestations have fascinated design historians greatly and are seen as key arenas for the mediation of design culture. Whether broadly conceived international events like the grand expositions in London 1851, Paris 1889 and New York 1939, or more contained national endeavours like *Norway’s Jubilee Exhibition* of 1914 or *The Festival of Britain* in 1951, studies of these shows have often focused on their function as official, idealized images of national identities as envisioned by the organizers and commissioners.¹⁰ Like exhibitions, professional organizations in the field of design exist at both the international and national level. International organizations like the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA) are emerging as the subject of design historical research. Yet most professional organizations have had a national remit, and have thus been instrumental in forging a distinctly national professional design discourse – as shown, for example, in the case of the Deutscher Werkbund and the British Society of Industrial Artists.¹¹ Design education represents another field where design historians have intertwined design discourse and national narratives. The Bauhaus, for instance – despite its international fame and diasporic afterlife – is habitually portrayed as giving material form to the political ambitions and cultural advances of the Weimar Republic.¹²

Equivalently, the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm is often pitched as reflecting the democratic state-building efforts of the Federal Republic of Germany.¹³ In exploring the designing of modern Norway this book examines all of these types of institutions – exhibitions, organizations and schools – but more than any other single type of institution, the book's narrative relies on another type which also more often than not has a national purview: magazines.

Design magazines are extremely rewarding sources for design historical studies, and this book makes extensive use of them. A brief reflection on the methodological and historiographical significance of design magazines is therefore appropriate. In 1984 Clive Dilnot wrote that:

A history of the rise of the design journal as the vehicle for projecting the ideology or the value of 'design' would be an enormous contribution to understanding the profession's self-promotion of design values. To map the changing values, ideas and beliefs expressed or communicated in text and graphic layout could, in a sense, map the history of the professions. Is the history of design literally contained in the glossy pages of *Domus* or *Industrial Design*?¹⁴

Perhaps it is because Dilnot hid this intriguing remark in a footnote that this challenge seems to have been little acted on. Whereas a 'history of the professions' should make use of a wider spectre of sources, I fully agree with Dilnot that design magazines are vital sources in 'understanding the profession's self-promotion of design values'. In a sense, then, through its close analysis of design discourse as expressed in design magazines, this book is a contribution to such an endeavour – although it is not limited to the history of the design profession(s), but casts a wider net to examine the history of design discourse.

To my knowledge, a comprehensive history of design magazines as called for by Dilnot is yet to be written. But his request for greater attention to their value as historical sources is being responded to. Grace Lees-Maffei has observed that arenas of design mediation, such as magazines and advice literature, recently have become valued as design historical sources because they provide the historian with a focus attentive to negotiations between the spheres of production and consumption.¹⁵ Likewise, in their introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Design History* on the role of magazines in the making of the modern home, Jeremy Aynsley and Francesca Berry argued that 'Publishers [of interior design magazines] negotiated the intersection between manufacturers, retailers, designers and the consumer; they addressed the householder interested in matters of taste and decoration as well as providing specialized knowledge of the art and decorating professions'.¹⁶

There are, in other words, many reasons why design magazines such as those examined in this study are interesting and important historical sources, and most of them seem to hinge on the magazines' unique position as a site of mediation, negotiation and domestication. To borrow a concept from Ruth Oldenziel (*et al.*), design magazines comprise an excellent source for studying 'the mediation junction'.¹⁷

However, as magazines do not merely *transmit* design discourse, but contribute to its *transformation*, they become interesting objects of study in their own right as well. It follows that concerns about the magazine's background, context and networks are vital when assessing its status as source material. As Eugene Ferguson observed in a discussion on the use of technical (trade) journals as sources:

4 *Introduction*

In order to use those journals intelligently as historical sources, we should know what was on an editor's agenda, how his ideology influenced the words we read, what hobby or obsession or loyalty may stand behind the campaigns and crusades we encounter . . . The motives and purposes of editors (and publishers, when an editor was not also publisher) were varied and full of subtleties, but we can be sure that few editors saw their calling as merely a job to be done in order to collect a weekly pay envelope.¹⁸

Ferguson's point is not to discourage historians' use of this material, but to stress that the explicit programmes, the implicit ideologies and the more or less hidden agendas that underpin publications such as technical journals or design magazines must be duly factored in by the conscientious historian for them to become good sources. Design magazines, though, are often so profoundly ideological in character as to make such potential oversight unlikely. Ferguson's reminder is nevertheless useful, especially when investigating the more explicitly ideological and morally charged discourses in the pages of the trade press.¹⁹

Domestic design discourse

Although this study takes place in a national setting, it avoids any absolutist understandings of the nation and essentialist notions of 'national style'. The nation is a complex and contested unit but, as argued above, it remains a highly relevant arena for studying processes of historical change. The mesh of cultural, social, political and economic configurations and codes that make up our society clearly contributes to maintaining the nation and the national as valid categories of demarcation and identity. I thus believe it is meaningful to discuss Norwegian design discourse as distinct from that of other nations, but without striving to find in it some innate 'Norwegian-ness'.

This 'essential anti-essentialism'²⁰ notwithstanding, the historian would be ill advised to disregard established essentialist constructions of meaning – partly because the construction of these is an interesting object of study in itself, but also because the analyst is always partly dependent on the historical actors' own field of vision. The writing of history requires a certain degree of conceptual overlap between the historian's analytical categories and the historical actors' categories. The thematic focus of a history of design discourse in Norway thus relies on the thematic focus of the actors, institutions and material under scrutiny. The strong bias towards the domestic context in Norwegian design history (as in much design history elsewhere) is impossible to avoid in a study that examines the discourse generated by and around design professionals, because it is a result of the interests and preoccupations of these historical actors and their later chroniclers.

This domestic bias is also partly a product of the rather essentialist notion that the home and its material constitution is particularly important in Nordic and Norwegian culture. Explaining this claim by pointing to climatic circumstances has been repeated so often as to become more or less a truism. Whilst Mediterranean people live their lives mostly outdoors, the story goes, the long, cold, dark winters force us to spend so much time in our homes that they come to take on a special significance. However, the questionable logic of this argument is easily revealed by pointing out the very different home cultures among traditional Inuit and Sami

communities. Even the social anthropologist Marianne Gullestad does, to some extent, subscribe to the climate argument in her study of how young Norwegian women configure their social lives and identities around their homes, but still points to ideological concerns and symbolic values as far more important factors in understanding the centrality of the home in Norwegian culture:

As products and symbols of contemporary Norwegian culture the homes are perhaps more important than banks, insurance companies, and public buildings. The culture is home-centred, and the homes may perhaps invite a symbolic comparison with, let us say, the Gothic cathedral of medieval France. They are not comparable in terms of aesthetic quality and grandeur, but in terms of being among the central products and symbols of their cultures.²¹

Gullestad's assertion is based on an ethnographic study from around 1980, but if she is correct, I would argue that her point is no less valid in 2005, in 1955 or in 1905. Whatever the reason may be, there seems to be some truth to the claim that Norwegians are particularly concerned with their homes and interiors, something that is also reflected in this history of design discourse in Norway.

Given the perceived centrality of the home in Norwegian culture, it is hardly surprising that the domestic sphere to a large degree has been the dominant domain both in the professional design debate and in consumers' concerns with design. This focus also seems to be in line with the assertion by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton that 'the emotional integration of the home is concretely embodied in household objects'.²² They recognize that many other types of objects also are important in people's lives, such as tools of the trade, cars, objects encountered in public space, etc. But, they continue:

one can argue that the home contains the most special objects: those that were selected by the person to attend to regularly or to have close at hand, that create permanence in the intimate life of a person, and therefore that are most involved in making up his or her identity.²³

It follows that the design of such artefacts and the ideas that underpin them should be of great interest to historians.

The design discourse examined in this book focuses less on actual domestic consumption practices (or design practices) and more on the ideological, moral, normative and prescriptive underpinnings of, and reflections on, such practices. In this respect it is related to Grace Lees-Maffei's study of domestic advice literature in Britain and the United States, which eloquently demonstrates the significance of domestic design discourse in the mediation of 'real ideals' in national design cultures.²⁴ The very fact that the domestic context was so central to the professional design discourse in Norway analysed in this book may very well have made it more relevant to the non-professional audience the actors and institutions sought to influence – although the degree to which these efforts instigated actual changes in patterns of behaviour, consumption and taste is of course difficult to ascertain and easily overestimated. This caveat notwithstanding, the ideals promoted by Norwegian design professionals were 'real' in the sense that they were responses to lived experience and developed with an explicit agenda of intervening in, and changing, contemporary

6 Introduction

design culture. In short, these ideals and their promoters were essential in designing modern Norway.

When Norway was modern

Although Bruno Latour has famously claimed that ‘we have never been modern’,²⁵ this book – the topic of which is not the philosophy of science, but the history of design – will adhere to a more common-sense understanding of the categories modern, modernity and modernism,²⁶ and thus argue that modern Norway was designed roughly between 1870 and 1970.

Following its defeat in the Napoleonic wars, Denmark was in 1814 forced to cede Norway, which had been its subsidiary state since 1537, to the Swedish king. A brief window of opportunity for achieving full independence at this point was soon slammed shut, but major steps towards that goal were nevertheless made, in that Norway went from being a satellite state under absolute Danish rule to becoming a modern nation state with its own constitution, parliament, currency, etc. in a personal royal union with Sweden. Full independence, however, was achieved only in 1905 when the union with Sweden was dissolved. Based on these landmarks in the nation state’s inception, it might seem natural to begin a national history of modern Norway in 1814 or 1905. However, as this is not a history of constitutional politics, but of cultural modernization and design discourse, these dates are not necessarily the given point of departure.

When socio-cultural developments are given proper attention, 1870 is often seen as an important a turning point in Norwegian history. Most surveys operate with this date as a defining moment, usually paired with 1905 as the matching ‘bookend’ for the emergence of modern Norway. Jostein Nerbøvik considers this period a transition ‘from agrarian society to organizational society’.²⁷ Gro Hagemann has called it ‘the modern breakthrough’.²⁸ But even politically, 1870 marks a significant shift. Although the national romanticism in art and literature flourished from the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until the 1870s that a political nationalism – fuelled, for example, by the writings of historian Ernst Sars – set the nation on a course towards full independence.²⁹ Art historical scholarship adheres to the same pattern, exemplified in the seven-volume art history survey *Norges kunsthistorie* (*Norway’s Art History*), where volume five covers the period 1870 to 1914 and carries the revealing subtitle *National Growth* (*Nasjonal vekst*).³⁰

The modern nation is a feature of modernity, in that a sense of national community was only made possible by modern infrastructure, technology and media such as electricity, railroads, steamships, roads, cars, the telegraph, the telephone, newspapers, magazines, radio, photography, cinema, etc.³¹ Most of these technologies, which were part and parcel of the modernization of society as well as of the consolidation of a modern national identity, were introduced in Norway from the 1870s onwards. And because design can be seen as essentially the interface between technology and people, it follows that design and design discourse is integral to these dramatic changes marking the emergence of modern Norway. Furthermore, as part of the budding ‘organizational society’, many of the institutions and associations which were seminal in establishing a more formal, organized design discourse in Norway were either founded, or undergoing significant reorganization, in the period from 1870 to the turn of the century. Examples include the Royal Drawing School, the Women’s

Industrial School, the museums of decorative art in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim, the Norwegian Home Craft Association, and the Norwegian Craft and Industry Association.

If it is relatively easy to date the emergence of modern Norway to c. 1870, establishing an end point to this development is more complicated and must necessarily be a more tentative exercise. In many ways, of course, Norway is still decidedly 'modern' – even more so than ever before. Nevertheless, beyond the pragmatic desire to avoid the precariousness of historicizing the immediate past, there are good reasons to argue that the project of designing modern Norway ended – or at least took some serious blows – around 1970. The post-war era of great political concord was drawing to an end in the 1960s. When this turbulent decade ended, the political landscape was severely radicalized and polarized, with a heated EEC debate, Cabinet crisis and the oil crisis waiting around the bend. This is what led Francis Sejersted to define 1970 as the end of the period he has dubbed 'the social democracy's happy moment'.³² Politics and economics are deeply intertwined here, of course, and the oil crisis of the early 1970s has been seen as the end of 'the golden era' in Norwegian economic history as well.³³ At the same time the seed for a new golden economic era was planted with the discovery of oil on Norway's North Sea continental shelf on 23 December 1969, marking 'a watershed in national economic development . . . that catalyzed the general surge of de-industrialization in the 1970s, decreasing the possibility and necessity of maintaining a sizeable and viable consumer goods industry in Norway'.³⁴

The cultural radicalism of the late 1960s entailed a growing criticism of the consumer society, something which also affected design discourse. Critical voices began questioning the role of design in an affluent society and market economy, calling for a new perspective on design and for radical design solutions to the more fundamental problems of this world. In a sense, then, the design discourse became more ideological than ever around 1970. But at the same time, the traditional applied art movement and its ideological underpinnings virtually disintegrated.³⁵ The modernist mission lost its broad, unifying organizational base as the movement slowly fragmented and the various design sub-fields became more autonomous.³⁶

The structure of this book

This book takes as its point of departure the comprehensive modernization of Norway from the 1870s on, and the accompanying onset of the 'organizational society'. Chapter 1 charts the concerted efforts at organizing a national design culture in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Beginning with design education, it examines the role of the Royal Drawing School (*Den kongelige tegneskole*), which was reorganized in 1869 and subsequently became the nation's most important institution in the formation of designers. The chapter then discusses the establishment of another key educational institution, the Women's Industrial School (*Den Kvindelige Industri-skole*) in Oslo, established in 1875. This school would soon become closely associated with the vital home craft movement, eventually formalized with the founding of the Norwegian Home Craft Association (*Den norske Husflidsforening*) in 1891. The formalization – and aestheticization – of the home craft movement was largely the work of the new decorative art museums established in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim between 1876 and 1893 – institutions that immediately became essential actors in the

construction of both contemporary design culture and design history. Chapter 1 closes with an assessment of the Norwegian Crafts and Industry Association (Den norske Haandværks- og Industriforening), set up in 1871 to further the interests of manufacturers and central to the public mediation of Norwegian products through exhibitions both at home and abroad.

Chapter 2 continues the focus on institutions, but moves on to consider a new constellation and a new period: the early days of Norway's new status as a fully independent nation following the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905. Post-independence, the vernacular traditions cultivated in the home craft movement lost much of their allure and the quest for a 'national style' gave way to other concerns about modernity, often revolving around issues pertaining to modes of manufacture and the role of the designer. Preparing the new nation state for an existence alongside the great nations of international modernity became a central ambition for Norwegian design professionals and cultural critics. These efforts resulted, for example, in the first professional design organizations, the Association for Applied Art (Foreningen for anvendt Kunst) founded in 1901 and its successor, the Applied Art Association (Foreningen Brukskunst) established in 1918. Chapter 2 also discusses how design discourse in this period was a crucial and integral part of broader efforts at bolstering a distinctly modern national culture: the periodical *Kunst og Kultur* published from 1911 and the grand *Norway's Jubilee Exhibition Kristiania 1914* (*Norges jubileumsutstilling Kristiania 1914*) commemorating the centennial of the constitution and quite literally putting the new nation on display.

Chapter 3 focuses on the inter-war period, showing how modernism gradually became the dominant trope in design discourse. Taking a class perspective on this development, the chapter argues that modernism is ideologically promiscuous and thus lends itself to widely diverging agendas and initiatives for design reform. From the design community itself this becomes evident in how the Applied Art Association eventually – albeit briefly – achieved its ambition of publishing its own magazine, through which it sought to legitimize design as a culturally and economically significant professional activity rather than pursuing the social vocation so prevalent in the association's first years. The chapter then moves on to tracing how the same aesthetic paradigm emerged in the bourgeoisie home decoration magazines *Hus og Have* and *Vi selv og våre hjem*, where modern design was reconceptualized as a fashionable style, and finally to the opposite end of the class structure by examining how modern design was enrolled in the quest for improved housing and living conditions for the working classes through the *East End Exhibition* (*Østkantutstillingen*) and the radical architectural journal *PLAN*.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the particular circumstances of World War II. Under German occupation from 9 April 1940 to 8 May 1945, Norwegian designers were not directly involved in designing for the war effort in the way their colleagues were in the UK, the USA, the USSR, Japan and Germany. The war and the occupation nevertheless had significant consequences for Norwegian design discourse, and this chapter focuses on how this was playing out on the home front under challenging conditions. Partly cut off from their daily business, design professionals turned to debate with renewed fervour. What was 'good design' under these circumstances? Issues such as vernacular traditions, national identity, regionalism, etc. returned to the agenda. Chapter 4 analyses these debates as they unfolded in the pages of *Bonytt*, the design magazine established in 1941 the midst of wartime occupation and that

would remain the most important arena for design discourse in Norway for the next 30 years.

Chapter 5 examines how the professional design community positioned itself in the all-encompassing topic of the immediate post-war years: the reconstruction effort. This did not only entail the literal reconstruction of housing and infrastructure destroyed during the war, but also the reconstruction of the political and organizational systems, the economy, cultural life, and industry – in short; reconstructing the nation. Design, both as practice and as ideology, found its role in this process. In this climate, the design professionals realized that their legitimacy relied on their contribution to the common cause, and for a short while design discourse was shot through with a social vocation not seen since the 1920s.

Chapter 6 takes a close look at the international promotion of Norwegian design, focusing on the representations at the important *Triennali di Milano* exhibitions of the 1950s. These exhibitions were instrumental in shaping the international reputation of Scandinavian design, and the common profile of the Nordic contributions provided a golden opportunity for Norway to piggy-back her neighbours en route to international fame. This chapter focuses on Norway's participation in the *Triennali di Milano*, taking special interest in the at times less than straightforward relation between the rhetoric of the official textual discourse surrounding the events on the one hand and the character and contents of the actual manifestations on the other. What emerges is a highly strategic construction of a public, official image of Norwegian design. The aesthetic elitism of these exhibitions also testifies that the social vocation of the immediate post-war period soon evaporated in favour of a focus on ever refining the modernist idiom that was rapidly winning Scandinavian design international acclaim.

Chapter 7 charts the demise of the applied art movement. Within the Nordic design communities, the international visibility and acknowledgement brought about by the mythological construct known as 'Scandinavian Design' were largely considered desirable and well worth fighting for – perhaps especially so by the Norwegian community, who arguably had the most to benefit from this construction. Chapter 7 investigates how and why the Norwegian applied art establishment constructed and negotiated strategies for maintaining the holistic/universalistic approach to design so characteristic of Scandinavian Design and the applied art movement when in the late 1950s and 1960s the concept was severely criticized and challenged from within. The discursive positions charted here reflect significant changes in design practice, where the generalist outlook characterizing the applied art movement was being undermined by the new, more specialized professional identities of industrial designers on the one side and craft artists on the other.

Chapter 8 explores how the more radical components of design ideology that slowly gained momentum throughout the 1960s now and then came to the fore in the Norwegian design community. In various and not always coherent ways, petitions were made for increased attention to the social and moral responsibility of design. Nevertheless, a discernible shift in focus in the course of the decade can be identified: In the early 1960s, critical design discourse aligned with consumer activism, campaigning for product longevity and against faddishness, whereas ideas associated with ecology, resource management and environmentalism emerged as the most pressing topics toward the end of the decade. The counterculture and the political radicalization of the late 1960s resulted in small, dispersed, but ideologically and

symbolically significant attempts at driving design out of its comfort zone established in the prosperous post-war period.

Chapter 9 offers a meta-perspective, bringing this study of design discourse in modern Norway to a close by turning the spotlight on the medium itself. For three decades, *Bonytt* had been the only periodical produced by and for the professional design community in Norway, while, at the same time, it reached out to a wider congregation of readers with a culturally induced interest in design. In the course of just a few years, around 1970, the magazine underwent a profound metamorphosis. What had since its inception in 1941 been an arena for ardent advocacy was quickly turned into a conveyor of amicable advice. This remarkable transformation is partly explained by changes in design discourse itself; as progressive design theory and ideology was moving towards ergonomics, ethics and ecological concerns, a renewed design criticism would have required a reassessment of the relations between current scenarios of design practice and its own critical arsenal that the magazine and its editors proved unable or unwilling to effectuate. However, the metamorphosis was also closely intertwined with other changes including ownership structure, economy, generational shift in the staff, and developments in printing technology.

The century covered by this book thus represents a development in which Norwegian design discourse went from worries of under-modernization to worries of over-modernization; from the lingering frameworks of local subsistence economies to European integration and international free trade; from considering design responses to national poverty and social needs to grappling with global injustice and environmental problems. It is the ambition of this book to show how the many small and disparate issues raised and discussed by Norwegian design professionals throughout these hundred years, which seen in isolation may seem trivial, are part of such significant historical developments as to merit the heading *designing modern Norway*.

Notes

- 1 Kjetil Fallan, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010), 48.
- 2 Bill Brown, "Thing Theory", in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 7.
- 3 Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei, eds, *Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in an Age of Globalization* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2016); Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei, "Real Imagined Communities Real Imagined Communities: National Narratives and the Globalization of Design History", *Design Issues* 32(1) (2016): 5–18; Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei, "Introduction: The History of Italian Design", in *Made in Italy: Rethinking A Century of Italian Design*, eds Grace Lees-Maffei and Kjetil Fallan (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 1–33.
- 4 Christina Zetterlund, "Just Decoration? Ideology and Design in Early-Twentieth-Century Sweden", in *Scandinavian Design: Alternative Histories*, ed. Kjetil Fallan (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 103–116.
- 5 Kjetil Fallan, "'One must offer 'something for everyone'': Designing crockery for consumer consent in 1950s' Norway", *Journal of Design History* 22(2) (2009): 133–149; Kjetil Fallan, "Goldfish Memories: Recounting Oslo's Streamlined Aluminium Trams", in *Scandinavian Design: Alternative Histories*, ed. Kjetil Fallan (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 117–135; Kjetil Fallan, "Nordic Noir: Deadly Design from the Peacemongering Periphery", *Design and Culture* 7(3) (2015): 377–402.
- 6 Damon Taylor, "Plugging in: Power Sockets, Standards and the Valencies of National Habitus", *Journal of Material Culture* 20(1) (2015): 59–75.