

Back and Forth by twentytwentyone London Design Festival 2021



Celebrating the 25th anniversary of twentytwentyone, the exhibition Back and Forth on 20–26 September showcases the designs that have inspired the company's founders over the years, while also looking onward to a new era of creative innovation. Designs that have motivated and influenced twentytwentyone will be displayed alongside the launch of a brand new design company that offers a fresh and unique perspective.

Back

twentytwentyone was born through the fusion of 20th- and 21st-century design. The selection of modernist pre-war designs combines with the flair and technological evolution of the post-war era to create a seamless picture of modern design excellence. The twentytwentyone name bridges both centuries, to acknowledge both the enduring influence of heritage design and the exciting potential of the contemporary.

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In Back and Forth, Simon Alderson and Tony Cunningham will select 25 designs that hold particular meaning to them, presenting a unique and personal insight into their inspirations. This historic overview will provide a naturally curated display, rich in diversity by era, material and functionality. The exhibition will offer visitors a rare opportunity to enjoy an intimate view of the designs that have shaped the world of twentytwentyone in the last two and a half decades.

Encompassing furniture, lighting, industrial design and household objects, Back and Forth will be a showcase of design pedigree acquired through 25 years of immersion in ground-breaking international design thinking. Many objects will be familiar; some will be obscure and, hopefully, some entirely unknown. The designs have been chosen from a global roster of iconic designers, including the likes of Aalto, Eames and Sottsass, alongside the intriguing and lesser known. To create an edit of just 25 pieces has been no easy feat.

“25 years! To condense such a long time and so many incredible memories into objects is an impossible task, but we hope what this collection demonstrates is the absolute privilege it has been to source, share and appreciate the life-affirming qualities of good design.”

– Tony Cunningham, co-founder, twentytwentyone



twentytwentyone founders Simon Alderson and Tony Cunningham

Forth



Vaarnii's first product collection is a preview of what's to come this September

Back and Forth will also launch a new international brand in the design sector. Conceived to represent a Finnish tone of voice, Vaarnii provides a refreshing, contemporary perspective to the design market. In its first collection, Vaarnii demonstrates how the use of a nation's vernacular and raw materials are expressed through design.

Back and Forth will prepare for future dialogues and underline twentytwentyone's drive to continue to work with the progressive designers and manufacturers who will shape homes and interiors in coming years. The Vaarnii designs on display may similarly become classics of the future.

Vaarnii provides an exciting and rare opportunity for its creators to start with a blank canvas. Vaarnii has accepted the responsibilities of contemporary production through its use of sustainable local materials and factories. Its brief to designers was simple and honest:

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"We use solid natural materials and are inspired by the efficiency of vernacular design, where objects are made to service the basic needs of many people. Ours is a contemporary vernacular, combining the local with the global, craft in concert with technology. Vaarnii is built on strong brand values. An honest approach dictates the company's way of working, encompassing transparency in manufacturing, packing, shipping and selling. Vaarnii's products are designed to endure; they are robust and hardworking, conceived to last a lifetime and age gracefully."

–Antti Hirvonen, Vaarnii, founder

Vaarnii's initial range uses Finnish wild pine, a plentiful but overlooked natural asset, worked by local craftspeople and factories. Both established and emerging, the designers of the first 12 products are varied in their country and their approach. Together, they have created a diverse and thought-provoking collection. Many are UK-based, such as Industrial Facility, Sarah Kaye, Max Lamb, Philippe Malouin and Livia Lauber. Combined with the wider collective – including Dimitri Bahler, Soft Baroque, Cecilie Manz, Mac Collins, Kwangho Lee and Frederik Paulsen – Vaarnii's first design cohort provides a truly international sensibility.

twentytwentyone is the exclusive UK representative for Vaarnii. Back and Forth will be the first time the collection is seen outside of Finland, exhibited in the context of a rich and diverse cross-section of design classics.

"We wanted our 25th Anniversary to be both introspective, paying homage to our past while also reflecting a new partnership as a projection of the future. The Back and Forth exhibition will honour the fundamental components of twentytwentyone: the very best in pre-war, post-war and contemporary design."

– Simon Alderson, co-founder, twentytwentyone

Vaarnii founders Antti Hirvonen and Miklu Silvanto will be available for interview ahead of the brand launch. Interviews with Vaarnii designers can be arranged on request.

For high-resolution images, further information, product loans, or media requests please contact emily@zetteler.co.uk.

Notes for editors

Back and Forth, 20–26 September

twentytwentyone showroom, 18c River Street, London EC1R 1XN

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Founded in 1996, twentytwentyone celebrates outstanding 20th and 21st-century design from its shop on Upper Street Islington and showroom on River Street, Clerkenwell. It offers design lovers a selection of furniture, lighting and accessories ranging from Bauhaus classics and enduring mid-century masters to emerging talents and progressive new design.

Through twentytwentyone Contracts, the company also provides a dedicated service to architects, designers and commercial clients to select, supply and install furniture and lighting for hospitality, residential and institutional settings. Interiors furnished by twentytwentyone can be found at the Barbican, the Tate Modern, the V&A

Dundee, and numerous hotels and members' clubs around the world.

In addition, twentytwentyone produces its own range of furniture and lighting by historic and contemporary designers, which is sold worldwide. The company is committed to a programme of exhibitions, launches and communication with the designers, manufacturers and the partner it works with. www.twentytwentyone.com

Vaarnii

New design brand Vaarnii will launch in UK during London Design Festival as part of twentytwentyone exhibition, Back and Forth. The brand's name combines the Finnish words 'vaarna', meaning dowel, and 'saarni', meaning ash tree. Vaarnii represents the strength of making and material combined. The inaugural product selection contains 12 products, made entirely from FSC-certified, wild-grown Finnish pine. Subsequent product ranges will each be made from a single natural material.

The launch range features the work of a group of selected international designers: Dimitri Bahler, Soft Baroque, Mac Collins, Industrial Facility, Max Lamb, Livia Lauber, Kwangho Lee, Philippe Malouin, Cecilie Manz, Fredrik Paulsen, Sarah Kaye Rodden.

For the launch, Vaarnii has worked with Graphic Thought Facility to produce graphics; Connie Hüsser to style products; and photographer Jussi Puikkonen to produce imagery. A full list of collaborators is available at www.vaarnii.com