



Design by IKEA: A Cultural History

Sara Kristoffersson

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Sara Kristoffersson's compelling study provides the first sustained critical history of IKEA. Kristoffersson argues that the company's commercial success has been founded on a neat alignment of the brand with a particular image of Swedish national identity – one that is bound up with ideas of social democracy and egalitarianism - and its material expression in a pared-down, functional design aesthetic. Employing slogans such as "Design for everyone" and "Democratic design", IKEA signals a rejection of the stuffy, the 'chintzy', and the traditional in both design practices and social structures.

Drawing on original research in the IKEA company archive and interviews with IKEA personnel, *Design by IKEA* traces IKEA's symbolic connection to Sweden, through its design output and its promotional materials, to examine how the company both promoted and profited from the concept of Scandinavian Design.

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