

Creative Danes put Denmark on the world map

Denmark may not appear that impressive on a world map. But in spite of the limited size, several creative Danes have become famous and recognized worldwide. Creativity combined with the distinct Scandinavian touch seems to be the key for these great Danes who include writers, artists, designers and architects.

Danish Design

Especially industrial design, furniture and artfully crafted objects have always been some of Denmark's biggest export goods. The works of for instance Børge Mogensen, Hans Wegner, Arne Jacobsen, Poul Henningsen and Verner Panton are known throughout the world. They have indeed become immortal design classics.

Nowadays young Danish designers such as Louise Chambell have gained international honour for her way of thinking out of the box and further developing the Danish design tradition.

Danish Architecture

As for attractive architecture, international heavyweights such as Arne Jacobsen, Jørn Utzon and Henning Larsen have long ago placed Denmark on the architectural world map. Among upcoming and new thinking architects is worth mentioning Bjarke Ingels who has got well-deserved attention for the last couple of years.

Fashion

Clothing has occupied a special position within Danish design and the Danish fashion industry is booming like never before. Successful designers, international fashion fairs and two annual fashion weeks have rightfully put Denmark on the fashion map of Europe. Some even speak of Copenhagen as the fifth European fashion enclave.

Danish brands that have had international success in recent years include InWear, Sand, Red & Green, Julie Sandlau, Munthe plus Simonsen, Noir, Camilla Stærk, George Jensen, Kopenhagen Fur, Pilgrim and Evita Peroni among many others.

Art

In the field of arts, there has been a resurgence of interest in the paintings and sculptures from Denmark's Golden Age (1815-1848). Furthermore, modern art ranks high among Danes in terms of popularity and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art north of Copenhagen and newly build ARoS in Århus attract a large and enthusiastic international audience because of their extraordinary exhibitions. Among famous Danish artist are L.A. Ring, Asger Jorn, J.F. Willumsen and recent names such as Michael Kvium and Kristian Von Hornsleth.

Literature

The fairy-tale writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) probably remains the best-known Dane. His famous fairytales 'The Ugly Duckling' and 'The Little Mermaid' are still told around the world. Another well-known storyteller is Karen Blixen (1885-1962) who is especially known for her books 'Out of Africa' and 'Babette's Feast' the film version won an Oscar in 1988. A more up-to-date writer is Peter Høgh who wrote the bestseller 'Miss Smilla's Feeling of Snow', later filmed by the Danish director Bille August in 1997.

Movies and moviemakers

Denmark is famous for its achievements in cinema, past as well as contemporary productions, making Danish actors and directors highly respected and internationally acclaimed.

Lars von Trier is a key source of inspiration for the new generation of directors of the 1990s, which tackled new genres without losing their anchoring in Danish reality. He played the leading role in the Dogme 95 manifesto, which rebelled against the big-budget films and the dominance of technology and demanded a return to simplicity in the art of cinema.

His movies "Breaking the Waves" and "Dancer in the Dark" both received awards at the Cannes Film Festival. Another famous director is Bille August whose achievements include the Oscar winning movie "Pelle the Conqueror" (1989). Danish movies can show a distinguished list of awards and nominations at the Oscars, lately Susanne Bier's drama "After the Wedding" in 2007. Also Danish television series have won international awards as the Emmy.

A couple of Danish actors have made it to the big screen in recent years where names such as Mads Mikkelsen, Viggo Mortensen and Connie Nielsen stand out.

Music

There are a lot of up-front Danish bands and DJ's and every year many international artists choose to visit Denmark. In 2006, The MTV Europe Music Awards was transmitted live from Copenhagen, which brought a lot of international focus on Denmark and its artists.

A couple of Danish bands have made it on the international stage such as Michael Learns to Rock, Aqua, JuniorSenior, Infernal and Safri Duo.

Music Festivals

Every year, many visitors from all over Europe attend the legendary "Roskilde Festival", northern Europe's biggest rock festival. Many smaller festivals are also held during the summer. Famous American and European jazz musicians perform at the internationally acknowledged "Copenhagen Jazz Festival". Since the sixties, Copenhagen has been a central city for jazz in Europe, alongside other cities such as Paris and Berlin.

A Royal Ballet and a new Opera house

Denmark is very proud of the Danish Royal Ballet and Opera in Copenhagen. These two classical institutions in Danish culture have also received highly esteemed international recognition. The newly built Opera House has put even more focus on ballet and opera.

Body culture and sports

The Danes like sport, as participants, spectators and in front of the television. Sport is compulsory in school and almost two-third of all children are engaged in organised sports in their spare time. Football is the most popular sport in Denmark, hereafter comes gymnastics. Other popular sports are badminton and handball. Denmark has won most medals in yachting, rowing, canoeing, badminton and swimming, but the most famous names internationally belong to football players, for example Peter Schmeichel and Michael Laudrup. Both Michael Laudrup's two sons as well as Peter Schmeichels son are growing football talents with great expectations attached.