



# eoos full

We're negotiating our way through the crowds at Cologne's Messe. Sceptics back in the UK had doubted whether there would be any crowds – well if they could witness the mass of people heading towards the adjacent Vitra and Bene stands at Orgatec, they would certainly take their opinions back.

The fact that two of Europe's most impressive brands are placed opposite one another ensures that this is one of the show's hottest spots – a place to not only see, but to be seen at.

Of the many exciting product introductions on display between the two 'super-stands', it is Bene's Filo table that has currently caught our eye. The impressive conference and boardroom system follows the successful Filo chair launch of two years ago, and is once again the brainchild of EOOS Design.

For those keen on mythology, EOOS is one of the four winged horses of Aurora in Greek mythology. The name stands for the company's programmatic approach to design. EOOS creates ideas and products for a world in which ancient rituals and instincts contrast with new technologies and a dramatically transformed environment.

The firm was founded in Vienna in 1995 by Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl. EOOS is currently active in three areas of design: flagship stores, furniture/products, and basic research.



▶▶▶▶▶ Intriguingly, EOOS is a design company that tends to work on the principles of a rock band. The result of our work is more than the sum of individual ideas: it is the result of their multiplication. Again and again, the results astonish customers and even the members of 'the band' themselves.

We're fortunate enough to work ourselves through the Bene throng and sit with EOOS' Martin and Gernot. We begin by asking the pair to tell us more about the formation of the group and the subsequent relationship with Bene. 'We met 20 years ago,' the surprisingly fresh-faced Gernot recalls. 'And we're still friends after all those years. We met at university in Vienna.'

'We all studied industrial design rather than furniture design. We founded EOOS 14 years ago.'

'We grew up with furniture though,' Martin takes over. 'At the university it was called industrial design, but the professor we had was very strong in furniture design. Therefore, our path began with furniture – and now we are doing furniture again!'

We ask about the way in which the EOOS work is split. 'We do product design in many different fields,' Gernot explains. 'Then we do store and showroom design and brand work and also design

research. We do different things for different companies, and have one client in each field. So we have one kitchen company we work for – Bulthaup – and for bathroom design we work with Duravit. Of course, we also work with Keilhauer in Canada when it comes to seating products.'

When Gernot says 'of course', he is referring to a conversation we had a little earlier – which brings us back to the office furniture sector and to fellow Austrians Bene. 'About eight years ago we met with Mike Keilhauer, who came out to Vienna and gave us the possibility to design a new chair for the company. It's a funny story because we met Bene through Keilhauer – so it was a long journey to come back to Austria!'

'Manfred and Thomas (Bene) saw the (Filo) chair at NeoCon in Chicago and said 'Wow, we want to have something like this for our market in Europe,' Martin recalls. 'And so the story began – it is now a licensed product for Bene in Europe. They had no idea it was Austrian designed!'

We move on to the fantastic Filo portfolio, and ask about the EOOS design approach. 'It's about finding an idea for us,' Gernot tells us. 'We call it vertical analysis. For us it is important that we know▶▶▶▶▶





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Once again Gernot comes back to the principles that helped with the development of the sister chair. 'When you look at the legs, you see one leg and the distance to the next is quite big and then the distance to the third leg is big again. You breathe in slowly when you see the first leg and breathe out again when you see the next – it reduces everything.'

'It's a poetic concept,' Martin says. 'On the other side it is a tool. A tool is not too important when people are meeting. A tool has to do its job and nothing more. That's why it is important that we have a wide, clean surface with nothing visible. This is a new way of

thinking about such things. If you need more, you can add to it, if you need less you can reduce. Technology allows us to do this. New standards are always coming and in one year or two years, things will have changed and this will allow that change to happen – very easily, very quickly.'

We can't help but love the EOOS philosophy and approach – after all, who else would bring a Japanese archer to their roof? And the final word – well, two words? We'll leave them to Gernot, and his response to whether the guys have seen anything else that really excites them at Orgatec. 'Not really!'

