

Amsterdam, 12th June 2014
Felix&Foam – Pop Up Store

Kartell by Laufen at the Frame Magazine Pop Up Store in Amsterdam: new market leader shows practical flair and strategic vision

Just over a year from its debut, Kartell by Laufen has its own corner inside the new Pop Up Store Felix&Foam by Frame Magazine in Amsterdam to show the international market it really means business. Open until the 30th September 2014, the grand space, without a doubt, catapults the Kartell by Laufen collection into the glorious world of Dutch design. Housed in the Zuilenzaal, formerly the seat of Amsterdam's Department of Commerce and Literature the space provides a combination of arts, culture, photography, film, fashion and design all under one roof.

Amsterdam, 12 June 2014 – It is only one year since Kartell by Laufen first went on show at the ISH in Frankfurt, and right from the start the market's response has been enthusiastic: the whole design project spoke a different language from its competitors. Quality, innovation, research into materials, excitement, glamour are just a few of the ingredients and values of a project which has proved a winner from the very outset.

The power of its design has also gained recognition from such authoritative leaders of trade opinion as Wallpaper (which gave it the Best Wash prize at the **Wallpaper Design Awards 2013**) and Elle Decoration International (which put it top in the Bathrooms category with the **EDIDA 2014** prize).

Following the first 2013 Exhibition the range mounted a busy **roadshow** of international events in a large number of big cities (London, Brussels, Prague, Warsaw, New York, Miami, Paris and São Paulo), giving the world a chance to get to know its designs and feel the quality of its wares at major international design exhibitions: a year of hard work for both these firms, which have broken records together as they brought a complete yet varied range to market with a full catalogue on offer to buyers across the world.

Since that start, **150 dedicated corners** have already been established in prestigious retail stores; the aim is to achieve an even more local presence by the end of 2014, with at least **500 points of sale all over the world**.

That concern for a retail presence is again in evidence this June at the Felix Meritis Residence in Amsterdam where a representative selection from the range will be on display together with an example of a KbyL Corner. It is an open, light-filled container offering blow-up posters alongside the presentation of the products themselves. At the very first glance the overall impression immediately distinguishes KbyL's style from the run of other bathroom furnishing manufacturers: brand and products alike feature unmistakable glamour, energy and colour.

Claudio Luti, Kartell's President, said *"I'm proud to confirm Kartell by Laufen's increasingly established position as a market leader, a truly satisfying reward for everyone involved in the project, for our partner Laufen and for Ludovica and Roberto Palomba the designers. The range we first introduced at last year's Frankfurt ISH was the fruit of the massive effort we put into research, meetings and plans: four years' hard work. Right from the start, this initial collection has shown itself to be a complete bathroom range of immense usefulness, at home in any surroundings. The work is just beginning, though, for we are still only at the development stage both of the collection itself and of its sales network. I believe this first year's marketing and the results achieved – not to mention the prestigious prizes we have won – are a promising foundation for a project we are determined to see develop further over a long life."*

Alberto Magrans, Senior Managing Director of Laufen added *"Kartell by Laufen is a practical business combination which ticks all the right boxes: our outstanding partnership with Kartell has resulted in products with top-flight design, ready for marketing all around the world, as confirmed by the achievements of this initial year. To manufacture accessories which made the most of plastic's expressive capabilities we could have found other partners; but we wanted the best."*

The future of Kartell by Laufen has already arrived, in the present achievements of a brand which has been developed, right from the beginning, on the basis of a painstaking long-term strategy for product design and marketing.

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Kartell by Laufen – The collection

The Kartell by Laufen bathroom collection is a comprehensive and integrated project inspired by Kartell's iconic design married to Laufen quality in bathroom ceramic manufacture.

On the one hand we have Kartell: Italian, creative, full of colour and ironic playfulness. On the other, Laufen, embodiment of Swiss rigour and dependability, with a 120-year history of deep commitment to bathroom culture, innovation in the manufacture of ceramic sanitary ware, and continual investment in its greatest strength: the Swiss approach, a combination of research, quality, and care for the environment.

The two firms have a great deal in common; this, too, was a reason for choosing each other: their approach to industrial production, their vocation for research and dedication to technological innovation, their international markets, with distribution networks covering hundreds of retail outlets world-wide – and their genuine passion for high-quality design.

The interpretive design skills of Ludovica and Roberto Palomba have made this union bear fruit in an unprecedented collection with an aspirational and highly seductive marketing stance. A realizable dream; affordability with a sophisticated look; chic, but understated.

Uncompromising on design and "total quality", the Kartell by Laufen bathroom takes the form of an integrated architecture, an interconnected ecosystem in which washbasins, WCs, taps and mixers, containers, shower trays, basins, lights and accessories all go together with the utmost flexibility, changing their appearance chameleon-like to meet taste requirements across the board; the glassily transparent items in latest-generation polycarbonate and the neat corners of the totemic earthenware hand-basin will appeal to lovers of minimal, lunar, rarefied environments; amber-tinted plastics, on the other hand, or the soft roundness of a hand-basin and a lapping bath-tub will delight those who are keener on sophisticated fun and decoration. The severe geometry of the ceramic items is tempered by the many-hued lightness of the plastic ones.

The colour schemes are a project within the project. The entire palette has been reinvented, and emerging alongside primary colours we find earth hues, sand browns, heavenly blues, warm whites verging on yellow and cold whites tending towards azure.

The bathroom is, after all, the Free Zone of any home, where the senses give themselves up to sheer feeling; this is where *Kartell by Laufen* was born, a bathroom like none the world has ever seen before.

Project rationale

The two companies were drawn to this shared project by the many values and drivers they have in common.

- An international approach

The project's main ambition was for Kartell by Laufen to become the bathroom of choice in the global market – as indeed its two founders have so successfully done individually. It is designed with professionals in mind: builders, installers and architects all around the world. Its affordability and the flexibility of its aesthetics make it particularly well suited to the requirements of the contract market and the perfect choice for the public sector, the hotel trade, and office accommodation. Those same qualities likewise put it in tune with consumer tastes in every part of the world. The new bathroom collection, developed using the combined strengths of both brands, will be sold world-wide through Laufen's network of retail distributors.

- Technological innovation

The high value placed on innovation is another area where the companies see eye to eye. The project took three years to develop; and continuous research – something built into both firms' DNA – has enabled Kartell to refine the looks and tactile feel of its plastic materials, and enabled Laufen to revolutionize ceramics into a totally different material.

The new Kartell by Laufen bathroom is the first ever to feature the revolutionary new *SaphirKeramik*, a material which allows design characteristics inconceivable in the past. Corners with a radius of curvature as small as 1-2 millimetres (where until now the most that could be achieved was 7-8mm) for sheet-thin washbasins of amazing lightness not only in looks but in actual weight – *SaphirKeramik* is a material whose robustness allows thinner walls and a simpler ceramic structure which in turn means less material, lower weight, and even greater benefits in terms of sustainability, as less raw material is needed and also less energy for firing, production and transport.

SaphirKeramik is an advanced material of unrivalled mechanical strength, non-scratch and shock-resistant, as well as offering all ceramic's advantages of perfect hygiene and resistance to abrasion and the chemicals used in detergents.

- The industrial aspect

The *Kartell by Laufen* collection has been designed for selling on the scale required to pay back the heavy spending on technological research, design, marketing and advertising. Big capital sums have also been needed for the presses used to make the products, as well as investments in research.

- Design

The firms agree that what “design” means to them is an industrial project for manufacturing in styles consistent with the companies’ DNA but still eclectic, born from the creativity of different designers who can present a design approach that stands out from the crowd – in any case a long way from the “on and off” comings and goings of momentary fashion and so-called “styling”. Together, the two firms consciously decided to commission this project from the world’s best designers, ones with a natural flair for setting trends by introducing the market to iconic products.

- Sustainability and ethical conduct

They also share a vision which demands that not only the product but the process, too, must be sustainable, in a “cradle-to-grave” approach, which takes the total impact of production into account. Concern for the environment, recyclable materials, minimum waste of energy and water, less emission of CO₂ from transport. Another aspect of sustainability is the idea that a product should last: a world away from “disposable” culture. Laufen’s long-lasting ceramics and Kartell’s indestructible plastics give the solution to that: a virtuous circle which takes an ethical stance on industrial production and in which the designer has to think about problems upstream and downstream from the product itself.