Mid Century MADE MODERN

JENS RISOM DESIGN BY CAMIRA
Camira are the first textile company to recreate Jens Risom’s textiles, over 40 years after they were originally released. Simply beautiful, our reimagined products are a credit to the originals.

The two fabrics, Zap and Armadillo, are perfect for a wide range of commercial interiors. Zap is a classic dobby weave with vibrant contrasting or tone-on-tone cross colours, while Armadillo has added texture and depth of colour interest.
Mid Century
MADE MODERN
IN JUST ONE WORD – ZAP DESCRIBES THIS UPHOLSTERY FABRIC. IT PACKS A REAL PUNCH THANKS TO ITS VIBRANT, CLEAN, SATURATED, COMIC BOOK, JELLY BEAN COLOURS. ZAP HAS THE SOFTNESS OF YOUNG WOOL WITH THE TOUGHNESS OF A STEEL WATCH SPRING. ZAP IS INCOMPARABLE WHEREVER SUPER-WEAR IS DESIRED WITH COLOUR IMPACT, EXCITEMENT AND INTEREST. ZAP IS A NOW AND FUTURE FABRIC. DESIGNED BY JENS RISOM. REIMAGINED BY CAMIRA.

ZAP SCREECH [ZAP08]
rated

01. ZAP SCREECH [ZAP08]
02. ZAP CRACKER [ZAP12]
03. ZAP FLUMP [ZAP17]
04. ZAP KAPOW [ZAP06]
05. ZAP CRACK [ZAP11]
06. ZAP KAPOW [ZAP06]
Zap stays true to the feisty original – with bold refinement. A wool blend fabric using two beautifully blended yarns and creating a mesmerising shot effect, Zap has a palette of 30 colourways.

The confident brights remain firmly in place alongside tonal, softer colours. The result is a fusion of striking colours and subdued neutrals, forming a perfectly balanced palette.

We dyed the yarn to our exact colour specification to make 20 brand new yarn colours, with punchy cross colours throughout or strong solids on red and black.

Zap's colour palette works independently or alongside Armadillo.

Suitable for contract upholstery, Zap has been brought up to date technically too. It meets relevant flammability standards and severe contract abrasion performance.

Zap is an irresistible blend of retro and modern. We’ve stayed true to Jens’ vibrant original, which incorporated mainly primary colours, then refreshed them to give an unmistakable Camira stamp. This is a thoroughly contemporary palette.
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the answer is Risom

contemporary furniture for residential business interiors
They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. We believe homage is one step further. It suggests true inspiration — that you don’t just appreciate what someone has made. You also love the way they think.

That’s why we decided to pay homage to a true design icon, Jens Risom. By reimagining some of his mid-century textile designs, we’ve put our own interpretation on them and updated them for the modern eye. We’ve also created the fabrics in-line with current safety regulations and technical performance standards.

This project was never about reinvention – but collaboration.
Danish DELIGHTS
BORN AND EDUCATED IN COPENHAGEN, JENS RISOM EMIGRATED TO THE US IN 1939. JENS TRANSFORMED AMERICA’S TASTE IN INTERIOR DESIGN, AS PART OF A CELEBRATED GROUP OF DESIGNERS AND MANUFACTURERS.
BORN IN COPENHAGEN IN 1916, JENS RISOM CREATED FURNITURE THAT WAS ELEGANT AND FUNCTIONAL. HE CAUGHT THE DESIGN BUG FROM HIS FATHER, AN AWARD-Winning ARCHITECT.

THE EARLY DAYS
Risom attended Niels Brock Copenhagen Business School, then trained at the School of Arts and Crafts in the Danish capital, alongside Hans J. Wegner and Børge Mogensen. Some of his first professional experiences entailed working for the architect, Ernst Kuhn, as well as in the Stockholm department store, Nordiska Kompaniet. However, a meeting with an American diplomat back in Copenhagen marked a huge turning point in Risom’s career. Impressed by his designs, the diplomat suggested that Risom should take them to America, where they would stand out.
Risom was just 23 when he moved to the States in 1939. The stark contrast in the design cultures of the US and Denmark gave him an entirely new playing field. At first, it wasn’t easy for him to sell his concepts. Most American interior designers favoured old-fashioned concepts over contemporary design. Risom made it his mission to change this.

He first went to work for interior designer Dan Cooper, designing textiles and eventually introducing furniture pieces into the showroom. Risom’s simple outlook became evident – comfort is essential to good design.

Later that year, Risom met Hans Knoll, the son of a German furniture maker, and in 1941, the men took a three-month road trip around the US. They visited contemporary architects, furniture manufacturers, interior designers and middle-class American households to learn more about the North American furniture market.

In 1942, Knoll introduced his first furniture collection, comprising 15 designs by Jens Risom, including the now famous Risom Lounge Chair, made using discarded parachute webbing.
SETTING UP SHOP

This collection helped establish Knoll as one of the first manufacturers of modern design in America. Risom spent four years working with him before serving in World War II in Europe.

When he returned to the US he started his own design company, Jens Risom Design, in 1946. Jens wanted to have full control and quickly began undertaking furniture manufacturing out of a factory in Connecticut. Frustrated by how hard it was to source the right quality of fabric for his pieces, in 1954 he bought a textile mill in Massachusetts. By 1955, Jens had full control of all production.
RISOM’S LEGACY

Risom’s reputation was cemented when President Lyndon B. Johnson selected one of his chairs for the Oval Office.

Now widely known for the slogan “The Answer is Risom”, Jens Risom Design was strongly positioned as one of America’s best producers of well-crafted furniture. Eventually employing over 300 people, the company became one of the largest furniture makers in the US, with showrooms in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, LA and San Francisco, and additional licensees in England, Denmark, Argentina, Canada, Australia and Singapore.
In July 1961, Playboy Magazine featured Jens Risom as one of the six most influential designers in the US.
Our aim was to make Risom’s designs as relevant today as they were when first created.

We wanted to capture the spirit of the originals in terms of aesthetic and weave construction, while meeting today’s more stringent technical requirements. We also brought the style up to date by peppering the fabrics with a selection of shades that are right for the here and now.

Why Risom?
In a word, vision. Risom took complete control of his products. Like us, he saw the creative spark and the manufacturing process not as distinct stages, but as inseparable. For one to thrive, so must the other.

We don’t simply rate the way Risom worked – we love the work itself. His textile designs were the missing piece that brought mid-century furniture to life. His work has endured, to become part of the modern language of design.

Modern Updates to Timeless Designs
The fabrics are now engineered to meet modern standards for flammability, abrasion and light fastness. To improve performance and bring down the environmental footprint, the compositions were changed from the originals – substituting much of the nylon for wool.
Designed by Risom
REIMAGINED BY CAMIRA
Revisiting AN ICON

BLOCK ISLAND IS A PLACE OF DRAMATIC BEAUTY.
A FITTING SPOT FOR CHATTING TO SVEN RISOM
ABOUT HIS FATHER’S LEGACY.

Camira: Sven, can you please tell us where we are at the moment?

Sven Risom: We are on Block Island, Rhode Island. This is where Jens built his summer house in 1967, and it’s a very special place as it reminded him a lot of Denmark. It lies 13 miles off the coast of America, about 3 hours away from where he lived – and you must take the ferry or a small plane to get here. Jens and everybody else used to say that when you were going back to the mainland, you were going back to America. We have always considered ourselves to be a little bit different. These days we may secede, but I do not think that will happen.

One of the most beautiful parts of Block Island is how colours, lighting and shades transform. During the seasons, and even during this interview, you can see green turning brown. But the colours of the water also change, which are probably the most interesting along with clouds. Jens felt these kinds of inspirations were always critical. If you look at textiles, in the fabric lines, you know they are inspired from foliage. You know they are inspired by the blues in the water which, as you look out, you know is not just one colour. If there is a shadow from a cloud, the colour gets much darker and deeper, turning more green in the summer. You get these sorts of summer ocean colours that are very different from the winter colours, they can go from a luscious, inviting blue to a very stormy winter blue.

Colour inspiration was critical but so was the landscape. Walks on the trails here were really important which you can see in many of his textile designs, through a sort of movement. He did not always like very flat and static things. When Jens looked at art, he was interested by transition and movement. When you look at the majority of his textiles, there is action within the colours, within the woven structure, within the application and more importantly within the materials and fibres themselves.

C: Can you tell us about Jens’ upbringing and his first design influences?
There is action within the colours, within the woven structure, within the application and more importantly within the materials and fibres themselves.

Sven Risom

SR: Yes. His father was an architect named Sven. Inger was his mother and his other siblings were Ola and Nils. It was a very close-knit family. They lived in Copenhagen during the year and went further north to Fredensborg over the summer, or when they wanted to get out into the country. Jens grew up into a great life really, he loved to be part of entertaining, loved social structures and loved being with people. And like everybody I guess, he liked being the centre of attention. So you know, he would be so honoured today with Camira designing and revitalising his textiles – he’d love seeing this happen.

Unfortunately he always felt that when he came to the US he was living in a country where design was not always well understood. In Scandinavia and many other parts of the world, contemporary design is fairly well understood. While in other parts, it is not. I think that was always the disappointing thing for Jens. That people would look at his work and say how empty it was, or how it was too clean or too this and that. But really that was the beauty, because furniture should not overwhelm the textile, just like
the textile should not overwhelm the furniture. He liked a coarse texture to textiles, but they should never overpower the design of the chair.

C: Can you tell us some more about Jens’ own design company, Jens Risom Design?

SR: There are different goals that people have in setting up their own firm. I would say, interestingly enough, that Knoll is a good comparison with Risom. Knoll was not a designer although his second wife was. He very much started collections, and he brought in many great and well-known designers – who all had products or collections within Knoll. Jens was really steering the ship himself, and he liked to make sure that everything followed a certain vernacular, a certain form. He had a style that changed a little bit over time, but that was translucent throughout the whole process. He was part of everything.

While he had several designers that would help, it was a small team. After some time designing, he had problems with quality. His feeling was that a great design, poorly made, was poor. Just like a poor design, well made, was also poor. So, he had to have everything up at a certain level. For Jens, leading the process and having other people joining in was critical. But he was not very comfortable at leading a team, so Jens Risom Design did not grow rapidly but slowly and very purposely. There were offices around the world; in the UK, in Argentina, in Japan and in various other countries, and in many cities in the States, there were also showrooms. But the company did not grow the way other companies grew, because Jens valued the benefits of managing the process more than what theoretically could have been a financial benefit.

After a while, he became very frustrated with the lack of creative, interesting and exciting textiles, so when he heard of a textile company that was going out of business up in Massachusetts, he acquired that company and made it part of Jens Risom Design. That really helped solidify what Jens brought forward. Because now you were able to have the right textiles on the right
The first reintroduction of Jens’ textiles is with Camira and we are thrilled and really excited about this for many reasons.

SVEN RISOM

furniture, made in the right way. Even delivered in the right way, because how it was presented was just as important. Most of Jens’ work was by contract. So General Mills in Minneapolis, and banks in New York would standardise on his furniture. He focused a lot on executive offices with big desks, tables, chairs and secretarial credenzas. He loved how textures worked together. A smooth piece of furniture, well-sanded and well-oiled with a beautifully textured textile was a perfect match. He liked that kind of relationship.

C: Sven this is the first time any of your father’s textiles have been recreated and reimagined. How do you and your family feel about that aspect of bringing his textiles back to life?

SR: New pieces of Jens’ furniture have been reintroduced for many years. But the first reintroduction of Jens’ textiles is with Camira. We are thrilled and really excited about this for many reasons.
He had a passion about colours, and a passion about the balance between textures and textiles, between the wood and other materials. He loved the fact that in architecture, it was the complete package – the fabric, the textiles, the furniture, the surfaces, the leathers, the wood, whatever it may be. He loved that. So, we as a family could not be happier with Camira’s relaunch and reimagining. The interpretations are fantastic, and we are very excited.

Growing up, it was always about feeling different sides, like what does this fabric feel like? What is the woven structure like? And it was much about colours. If you look at some of his furniture (this is very typical), Jens would put a bright orange along with a nice piece of walnut, or put a bright blue against maple – how do you get that juxtaposition? So, for him, using what you describe as ‘punchy’ colours, he just found it exciting. Bringing the furniture alive. So you almost use the wood in the base and the furniture itself as the background, and have the colours come off it. He also loved texture. The complexity you can get with a deep weave is really, really interesting. He loved the fact that you can get different hues and different tonalities. You can get very different colour depths and temperatures, both from a textured surface and from a flatter one – but very colourful and alive.

Both with Zap and Armadillo, neither fabric has that kind of flat, straight colour. They are all a little bit more complex, a little bit more unique and that makes it interesting, right? We can all make blue fabric and we can all make red fabric, but to make something that has depth and texture to it, both visually and to the touch – that is important.

C: Here on the table we have Zap and Armadillo – the wool and woven textiles – both using your father’s original names. Punchy colours for Zap and more textured surface interest for Armadillo. Any initial reactions to them?

SR: We all grow up in different environments, right? When your father is a car mechanic, you grow up working on cars. When your father is an engineer, I guess you engineer things. I will never forget days when my father would come back with these boxes of swatches, and we would play with them or use them in different creations.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE CAMIRA & JENS RISOM FILM.
Block Island, Rhode Island, US
November 2018
ARMADILLO IS SPANISH FOR THE “LITTLE ARMoured ONE” – THE SUPER CUTE, ARMOUR-COATED, ROLY-POLY MAMMAL. THE FABRIC ECHOES THESE TRAITS IN A TOUGH, CONFIDENT, QUIRKY COMBINATION, SPORTING A SUBTLE WEAVE PATTERN TO CREATE VISUAL BALANCE THROUGH COLOUR, TEXTURE AND CONSTRUCTION. THE WOOL FLAX YARN GIVES VISUAL FLECKS TO BRING ADDED DEPTH AND INTEREST TO A FLEXIBLE TEXTILE. DESIGNED BY JENS RISOM. REIMAGINED BY CAMIRA.

ARMADILLO BATTLE [AM006]
Designed by Risom
REIMAGINED BY CAMIRA
01. ARMADILLO ANVIL [AM003]
02. ARMADILLO GAUNTLET [AM010]
03. ARMADILLO KNIGHT [AM014]
ARMADILLO IS A SOPHISTICATED BLEND OF COLOUR AND TEXTURE. INSPIRED BY THE ORIGINAL PRODUCT RANGE, WE CHOSE STRONG, RICH HUES THAT COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER TO ACHIEVE A RETRO FEEL.

We share Jens Risom’s passion for beautiful, elegant design and inspired by his original textile, we reimagined Armadillo. Made from a wool-rich flax yarn which is colour woven using three yarns, Armadillo has a palette of 12 selective colours.

The fabric achieves an understated rejuvenation, and a blend that maintains its original and sophisticated character.

Armadillo embraces bold pops of colour that bring the calm, muted tones to life. The colours change in proportion, giving the appearance of the fabric’s shade moving and changing.

Armadillo’s colour palette works independently or alongside Zap.
01. ARMADILLO SECURE [AM015]
02. ARMADILLO BRACE [AM005]
03. ARMADILLO ARC [AM019]
04. ARMADILLO GREAVE [AM002]
01. ZAP SNAP [ZAP01]
02. ZAP WHAM [ZAP23]
03. ZAP WHIRR [ZAP03]
04. ZAP SPLASH [ZAP27]
PRODUCTION
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