



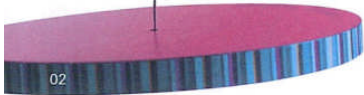
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## DESIGN

# XX

The reach and depth of the designEX fair makes it critical ground for creative excellence to shine. Hande Renshaw reports.

As a twenty-year-old event, designEX has come of age and what was once a handful of companies handing out brochures to the interested industry is now a major event on the Australian design calendar with stands so advanced, they resemble mini architectural structures. But amid the inventive structures and the complimentary champagne, there is something far more important that visitors travel to see – the products.

designEX is all about new products and innovative ways to make an impression. This year's event definitely caught my attention, right from the moment I stepped into the exhibition

centre. Upon entry the 'Design Through Time' feature was a highlight, displaying products from the last twenty years to form a storybook of symbolic design milestones, beginning with Marc Newson's 'Embryo Chair' designed in 1988, through to the 'Screw' stool designed by Ron Arad in 2007.

A brand new addition to this year's exhibition was Design for Sustainability (D4S), which brought together the best local sustainable products in one showcase. An architectural and design retail bookshop, designed by students at the Whitehouse Institute of Design, featured shelving made using Xanita's 'X-board', made from 100% recycled paper waste. Other companies to note in D4S were In your Room, Woven Image, Zip Heaters and Dulux Australia, all displaying their sustainable products in the arena bustling with eco-conscious designers.

The winner of the Best Stand (30-70m) for this year, and a personal

favourite, was the Axolotl Group's stand, which allowed visitors to walk through and engage in the metal box-like structure. And although it didn't secure the number one spot, The Laminex Group's stand still deserves special attention. Drawing its inspiration from a field of flowers, the company's textural surfaces were creatively displayed as discs that hung suspended from the ceiling. Visitors were welcome to interact with the stand, which in my opinion was a great way to explore the product.

More dazzling still, was the increase in the number of stands that showcased their products balanced with imaginative stand construction; from Kohler's stand and Jamie Durie's Outdoor Room featuring the 'Fytowall' vertical garden to the Forbo stand designed by Exponential Design, and Abet Laminati's glossy laminate covered stand, there was plenty to absorb. For all the excitement surrounding the best stand, designEX

01 & 04  
The Bookshop,  
designed by White-  
house Institute of  
Design using X-board  
02  
The Laminex Group's  
disc of laminate  
03  
The winning stand  
– Axolotl Group's  
structure showed  
the diversity of  
their products

once again, proved an ideal opportunity for introduction to new products, new companies and ultimately, new ideas.

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