

Creative collaboration central to Blok's Konnect

By  Sindy Peters

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Besides the nine properties Blok has launched since its inception in 2014, the urban property developer has also worked on various urban and design intervention projects. One that launched late last year is [Konnect](#), a collaborative showcase of local designers handpicked for their creativity and shared design passion, coming together to create once-off limited edition pieces.



Holly Hartlyn, interior coordinator at Blok

We interviewed Holly Hamlyn, interior coordinator at Blok, to find out more about Konnect, and some of the other design and urban intervention projects in which the property developer has invested.

What prompted the launch of Konnect?

Design is an important part of everything we do at Blok. The design of our buildings, the spatial layout and functionality of each and every apartment and the fittings and finishes specially selected, all form an important part of what makes our product offering special and unique. While we are first and foremost property developers, we also have a huge appreciation for furniture and home accessories that turn an apartment (any, not just Blok) into a home. Over the past two and a half years we have welcomed many customers into our showroom, often not just to sell a home to, but to also engage with on beautiful designs and furnishing spaces. As a result, Konnect was born. It is a way for us to offer a piece of Blok to anyone off the high street who isn't necessarily in the market to buy a Blok urban home. It also gives us the platform to engage with local designers and to create the opportunity for local designs to reach the market.



Climb by Jasper Eales

How are the local designers selected to be a part of the Konnect network?

The local designers we have selected to collaborate on Konnect products are people whose work we admire and whose products we have seen in local stores but also people we think could produce some great products according to what we

wanted in our first range. They have been invited to join The Design Network based on their passion for and ability to master certain materials. These are not the only designers we will work with, in fact we are already looking into products for the next range and with that will be some new faces in the network.

How does the collaboration process work in creating the limited edition pieces?

The team at Blok research global trends and what is available (or not available) locally. We then formulate a brief for our invited designers to interpret and creatively unpack. We then move into creative design and prototyping. We try and make our products as unique as possible so that we can produce in small quantities and keep everything limited edition and often, made to order.



The Loop by North Ltd

What are some of the most interesting pieces created so far?

So far, in our inaugural range, we have such diversity and believe that all of the products are unique and interesting. The “bestsellers” and products that customers have responded really well to so far are:

The Roll Up: a beautiful hand-stitched leather holder that can be used for yoga mats, beach towels and/or picnic blankets. It has a shoulder strap as well as handles so you can choose how you roll...

The Sofa Saddle: available in either chestnut or black leather, used for hanging over the side of your couch to store all those things that usually end up down the side of the couch and lost into oblivion.

The Gin Table: a Blok original, designed in-house. Upcycled stone cut-outs from our projects used to make beautiful side tables.



Roll Up by Stockton

Why is it important to Blok that the designed items be affordable and accessible to all?

The Blok product to date is a premium, high quality finished apartment that is bought off plan in developments in Cape Town's Atlantic Sea Board and City Bowl, some of the country's most expensive real estate. Our company is young and we have strong views towards being inclusive and building a better neighbourhood, community, city to live in. With our showroom and office situated on Regent Road, we welcome people from all ages and walks of life to share in our passion for design and beautiful things.



Sofa Saddle by Matblac

Apart from Konnect, could you tell us more about some of the other design and urban intervention projects in which Blok has invested?

Blade

[Blade](#) is a new outdoor bike parking system designed to look like blades of grass. Blade was conceived and produced by multi-disciplined agency North Ltd and local Capetonian designer Rotem Shachar who set out to develop a unique bike

parking system that complemented the natural beauty of Cape Town while adding to the urban landscape. Cast in concrete with 16 stainless steel cables, coated in green polyurethane to mimic grass, fitted with a flexible nib, Blade is nature, design and functionality coming together seamlessly.

Thornhill Park

Blok's second development in Green Point, SEVENonT, on Thornhill Road is also one that showcases the brands commitment to "walk the talk" of having a positive impact on their community. Blok has identified the park that SEVENonT overlooks as an opportunity to work with the City of Cape Town to beautify and maximise its potential. As part of this initiative they have also committed to ongoing donations to the License Plate Recognition Program and local Ratepayers' Associations.

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