

# RUM

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## SPACE MATTERS

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KVADRAT X BOURULLEC

## MATERIAL MATTERS

Influential French designers Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec have created a light-filled COPENHAGEN SHOWROOM for textile manufacturer KVADRAT that showcases the MATERIALITY at the heart of the Danish brand. Erwan Bouroullec talks about he and his brother's longstanding relationship with a company that shares their ETHOS for honesty and quality.

*How did you come to know Kvadrat?*

When I was 22 I won a design competition and needed textile for my project a large armchair called '1 et demi' so I contacted several companies asking for samples. Kvadrat was one of the few to respond and they sent me a whole sample catalogue of textiles. Their generosity still shines through.

*How did you approach designing the showroom?*

The space and project is all about materiality and we wanted it to be a vibrant playground with glass walls that makes the most of the natural light streaming into the showroom near the water in Copenhagen's Frihavn. The area is rather raw and industrial, so our aim was to create an airy but warm gallery space where the focus is on the textiles, which are displayed in a flexible specially-made grid system.

*What are you trying to communicate through these spaces?*

You can say that the overall project is about acting as truthfully as possible. Everything Kvadrat does is the real deal. Their textiles are incredibly well done and made of the finest of materials. There are also desks and cabinets all over the showroom made in Really solid textile boards that recycle waste cotton and woollen fabrics.

*Why is truth so important to you?*

We live in a world surrounded by fake everything, fake news, fake surfaces, and so on. In the past decade we have seen that things are not what they seem. Ceramic tiles looking like wood or marble. Or gold plated plastic perfume bottles. For us adults it might be okay, because we are old enough to have a sense of materiality. But if children grow up thinking the pea comes out of the can and not from a plant there is something wrong. We need to understand materiality to understand our world and to know how to take care of it. If you don't understand the basic things, you will not un-

derstand the complex either. So we need to start with where simple things come from and work from there.

*How do textiles fit into this quest?*

Weaving is one of our oldest crafts and textiles are a part of human beings' survival and wellbeing. I believe that our bodies remember how comforting it was being wrapped up as infants. In a modern and urban world fabrics are still important and can make a world of difference. Once I met an architect who had used our Alcove Sofa for Vitra for the interrogation room of a police station where they do interviews with the people who had been assaulted. The fact that the victims were no longer in the barbarian world, but taken seriously and surrounded by comforting materials made them open up and relax. This says a lot about the nature of human beings and the delicacy of textiles and the need for them in our environments whether they be offices, home or public spaces.

*Why do you say that textiles make us take responsibility?*

When you look at the delicacy of Kvadrat's textiles you sense that this came from hard work and intelligent sourcing. Their appearance is made by the weaving itself and not from prints or external coatings and thus is full of subtle information. In that way they become very logical and simple. It's the fabric itself that speaks. If you look at nature it is a very complex ecosystem with so many refined details for your body and brain. Therefore, I think we feel stimulated being around fabrics like these because they are full of information. If we lived in a world without information we would go crazy and lose navigation. Information as you see it in the complex yet honest structures in the weaving of textiles is a key to understanding precious 'materiality' and I consider that it helps to take responsibility and behave properly around it. /



Textiles are hung on a specially-made system of flexible grids in the airy glass-walled showroom.