



SPATIAL STORYTELLING

studio aisslinger brings the qualities of narrative to the world of interior design. To compete with their digital counterparts, physical spaces must be more than neutral, interchangeable boxes: they have to inspire and tell stories. The analog must provide tactile, unexpected experiences.

The concept of design used to be quite simple. “Form follows function” was a credo that defined modernity for decades. Things stood for themselves. In the postmodern era, the object was no longer what counted, but rather the value we attached to it. And this is precisely where narrative enters the picture: the story behind something becomes as important as the thing itself. Today, consumer products and works of art are not the only things relying on story to stand out: spaces need them too. A pioneer in the discipline of spatial storytelling is Werner Aisslinger, founder and creative director of studio aisslinger. The Berlin-based designer creates furniture and lighting for renowned companies such as Cappellini, Vitra, Porro, Interlübke, and Moroso. Fifteen years ago, he also began furnishing hotels, restaurants, offices, and coworking spaces.

“It’s about creating an experience,” says Werner Aisslinger. “And this happens when there is more than just a beautiful design with beautiful colors, shapes, and surfaces.” The aim is to infuse the formal aspects with substantial, relevant content. One way of approaching this is for the spaces to address contemporary issues, such as sustainability and ecology, issues that imbue the design with a moral and ethical dimension. “People are looking for a connection

to an object, be it the origin, the manufacturer, the local production, the materials. So people buy much more than just a purely functional object. This is also the case with interiors,” Aisslinger is convinced. “When traveling, one can stay in a standardized hotel,” he continues, “but if you want to gain a bit of joie de vivre, you want to go to places that interest you, that somehow take you further, that inspire you, that surprise you and amaze you.” We are spending more and more time in the digital world, whose spaces are becoming increasingly seductive and immersive in their appearance. “Conversely, real or analog spaces are competing with the perfection of the digital world. I can order everything online, whether it’s furniture, clothes, or food. So why do I still go to a restaurant? Or why do I go to a bar, a concept store, or a hotel lobby?” asks Aisslinger. He was born in Nördlingen, Bavaria in 1964, and gained his first professional experience in the design offices of Ron Arad and Jasper Morrison in London and Michele De Lucchi in Milan.