



Valdís Steinarsdóttir

Aug 18, 2020 10:10 UTC

Formex Nova winner Valdís Steinarsdóttir: "I want to take advantage of the fact that we designers have such a great influence in society"

In fierce competition with top designers from all over the Nordic region, Formex Nova 2020 is awarded to the Icelandic designer Valdís Steinarsdóttir, 29, who in her work focuses on recycling natural materials. Together with researchers she has, among other things, developed two completely new materials, Bioplastic Skin and Just Bones.

In its motivation, the Formex Nova jury highlights in particular Valdís

Steinarsdóttir's ambition to find unique solutions to social and environmental problems, and how she creates an open discussion about social change through design.

Congratulations on this year's Nova award Valdís!

– Thank you, I feel very honored and ecstatic! It is a great recognition of my work, and is a fantastic platform to showcase what I do. I'm sure this will open many doors.

How would you like to describe yourself as a designer?

– It is very difficult to describe myself, but in my work I focus on society and how we can change it for the better. My design is very much about dialogue, where I address difficult and current topics and societal problems.

Can you give some examples of such topics?

– Recently, I have been very interested in the meat industry and our relationship with animals. For example, I have developed a packaging material for meat made from animal skins. Bioplastic Skin looks and feels just like plastic. Recently I have, together with Innovation Center Iceland, started to develop the material further. I hope to be able to initiate discussions about how we produce meat, and if we can do it in a different way.

What is it that you are most critical of when it comes to the meat industry?

– We should stop large-scale animal husbandry and produce meat on a smaller scale. We overproduce meat and need to think more about how we manage our resources, not least on a small island like Iceland. In the future, we must make better use of all resources, and for example use the whole animal. I have learned an enormous amount through the research I have done in connection with my projects, where I have collaborated with many researchers and experts.

Another example of this is your project Just Bones - tell us a little about it!

– Just Bones is a material I have invented, made of bone ash and bone glue, which I can work with just like with ceramics, and process in many ways. You can, for example, make tableware or furniture out of it. Just Bones is a good example that there is so much material in our environment that we overlook.

Do you think it is enough if an object "only" is beautiful?

– For me, an object becomes beautiful when I know the story behind it and there is a deeper inherent meaning. And I think the manufacturing process is beautiful. I do not think it is wrong if someone strives to do something just

for aesthetic reasons, but I myself want to take advantage of the fact that we designers have as much influence as we have in society. We are, in a way, storytellers, who in an understandable way can point out various societal problems.

Which of all the things you have done are you most proud of?

– What a very difficult question. My projects have given me very different experiences, and I am very grateful for them all, so I have a hard time choosing a single thing.

Can one buy your items?

– Yes, some of them. I am not driven by money, so I see products I sell almost as by-products of my work as a designer. For example, I have made rocking horses and slippers from horse hides, but everything is very small-scale.

How do you finance your work?

– I have received several grants, and just this year I have been awarded an artist's salary from the government. I am very grateful, because there are so many talented designers and artists here in Iceland. Fortunately, I do not spend so much money privately; I am happy and satisfied as long as I can continue to do my work.

***The jury's motivation:** "Design that focuses on material experiments and finding unique solutions to social and environmental issues. Through her projects, she wants to have an open discussion with the audience about social changes through design."*

World-class meetings

Inspiration and information, business opportunities and new friends. [Stockholmsmässan](#) is the largest meeting place in Scandinavia hosting around 70 leading exhibitions and hundreds of national and international congresses, conferences and corporate events every year.

Love to meet you!

Contacts



Carolina Ekman

Press Contact

Press Officer

carolina.ekman@stockholmsmassan.se

+46707894135