

September 2011

# nef news

100% Design London Special Edition

## What's Nef doing at 100% Design?

What is Nef doing hiring an exhibition booth at a major international design fair in London? Ostensibly a real estate developer-that bottom-line-driven entity often considered the nemesis of creativity and self-expression-Nef is demonstrating that it is making design instead of subdivisions.

The world will get its first hint of this when Nef -the company's name comes from the Turkish word for "breath"-welcomes visitors to the 100% Design fair into a sound installation created by designer and composer Sébastien Agneessens that doubles as its trade fair stand. Consisting of three sonic sculptures-clusters of extruded brass horns that look the way the music of jazz great Charles Mingus sounds-the booth offers a lyrical first-look at the much larger architectural artwork that it anticipates with the opening of the Nef 163 residential tower in 2012. The Golden Horns, a title that conflates the musical instrument with the name of Istanbul's immortal harbor, will also comprise a series of brass pipes that will transform the building's infrastructure and weave in and out of its 35 floors, carrying improvised compositions-a mixture of treated live sounds and prerecorded musical samples-from the building's lobby to the observatory at its crown.

Agneessens' musical booth points to the fact that Nef is a real estate "laboratory" whose development projects are predicated not merely on innovations in architectural and interior design, but on the construction of a lifestyle better tailored to the zeitgeist, as well.



The company was launched in 2009 by the conspicuously young (at 29 years old) Erden Timur under the aegis of parent companies Timur Gayrimenkul Yatırım A.Ş. and the Timur Group. Nef seeks out designers with great care and then gives them carte blanche commissions that often result in unconventional schemes. Timur, himself, approaches design and art as creative systems that work best in concert and has recruited a particularly diverse roster of eminent and emerging international talents: in the course of only six projects, he has tapped no less than 12 artists, product and interior designers and architects (residential, skyscraper, landscape) to create a mash-up of creatives that includes Americans, Europeans, Brits (knighted and unknighthed) and next generation Turks.



# In the vanguard: **1+1=24**

“We are recognizing that avant-garde design has become crucial to progress,” Timur explains. “‘Classical’ is being described as boring, out-of-date and remote from our lives. More and more people have begun to see themselves as subjects of the future instead of being subject to the past.”

With each project, the Nef team identifies and addresses details of daily life that most developers fail to take into consideration at all. From doorknobs to elevator music, what results from this accumulation of reinvented components large and small, is an entirely fresh experience of living space. Which tends to create an entirely fresh experience of living.

Foldhome is Nef’s seminal design. Recently patented in Turkey and awaiting patent in Europe, the Foldhome system is built into each of its properties, enabling tenants to buy a single-bedroom flat, while also having access, on a modest pay-to-play basis, to shared amenities that extend their “personal” space into what is virtually a 24-hour-a-day, 24-room home. Nef’s math, “1+1+24 rooms,” suggests that Foldhomes and Foldoffices encompass prosthetic interiors dedicated to entertainment of all sorts—Playstation, skiing on an artificial

piste, cigar smoking and wine tasting, stargazing from an observatory!— that would fit more readily into a 1,900m<sup>2</sup> house. Instead it all becomes available to someone who only has the budget to live in a 60m<sup>2</sup> flat—a 60m<sup>2</sup> one-bed one-bath with 24 spacious rooms in it, that is.

Foldhome takes Nef’s quintessentially Turkish penchant for viewing the world through many lenses to the extreme. Its inaugural projects—offices, suites, apartment buildings, flats and dorms—are benefitting from the ne plus ultra experience of firms like Foster + Partners, SOM, FX Fowler, RMJM, Tago and LTL Architects while also mining new talents from Agneessens to Dror Benshetrit, Stefan Boubilil of The Apt, Harry Allen, Voos and Alper Böler. Enlisting so many designers, according to Timur, ensures diverse approaches and solutions to every problem and an intense attention to the minutia and the miscellany.

**“Our projects are designed by different designers who create every tile, handle, and elevator button in detail and they will be redesigned every five years,” he says. “We give them the attention usually reserved for design objects instead of architecture.”**



## Details & Diversity

Timur recruited the relatively young studio Autoban, which has garnered huge success at home with interiors and furniture designed for The House Hotel and Café and local fashion label Vakko. They were, at first glance, an obvious choice. Nef, however, gave them not an interior, but their first architectural assignment instead. The boxy, stacked Nef 163 tower that resulted takes its cues, according to Autoban partner Seyhan Özdemir, from the cargo containers crowding the city's harbors and the fabric of the Gültepe neighborhood around it. Gültepe is very close to the center of the city, but it consists of piecemeal structures patched together without the city's authorization, buildings large and small, short and tall, jumbled together. Autoban echoed these informal architectural shapes to create a highly textural façade with a syncopated visual rhythm. What is on the inside does much the same.

Inside is where the visions of six additional designers meet. Paris-born, New York-based Agneessens' creative direction, curation and design for clients like Diesel, Reebok, Droogand Marithé & Francois Girbaud place him at the crossroads of art, design and music.

New York-based Israeli Dror Benshetrit, has earned international kudos for his furniture and tabletop objects for clients including Cappellini, Alessi and Puma. American architects Paul and David Lewis and Marc Tsurumaki of LTL have been applauded for the creativity of their interiors for restaurants and academic institutions. Director of The Apt creative agency, Stefan Boublil, has proven to be a master of making tight urban apartments feel, nonetheless, roomy and expressive. Harry Allen, renowned for his design of Murray Moss' New York showroom, as well as elegant and humorous products for Gaia & Gino and Areaware. Finally, the furniture and interiors of Istanbul designer Alper Böler have earned him copious international press coverage for their inventive functionality and pared-down warmth.

Posh, sporty or contemplative, from art and music studios to theaters and Playstation playrooms, each interior transports guests into a wholly different world. Clearly, there is something for everyone in Nef's efficient and exuberantly livable buildings.

**“Our principle is design for everyone,” Timur says. “It’s like breathing. Breathing clean air is a human right and living with, and through, good design is also.”**

