



Personal profile IKEA of Sweden

“I try to make sure that we dare to think differently and take new paths.”

Michael Nikolic, Creative Leader at IKEA of Sweden

MY BACKGROUND

I was born in 1965 and have a Masters in Business and Management from Lund University. I began working at IKEA in 1995 as a product developer in different home furnishing business areas – Dining, Home Office, Living Room, and Kitchen (where I worked with the new kitchen system METHOD), and with the second IKEA PS collection in 1999. I’ve also worked outside of IKEA for seven years in North America and Asia as a development consultant in the furniture business, and had my own brand and upholstery production. Since 2014 I’ve been a Creative Leader here and work with our IKEA Collections.

WHAT I DO AT IKEA

My job is to question and drive change within IKEA, both by giving our customers new experiences and also by driving internal development. I try to make sure that we dare to think differently and take new paths. I am not here to follow – I’m here to blaze new trails.

MY THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRATIC DESIGN

When I was product developer for the second IKEA PS collection in 1999, we actually developed the theory behind the Democratic Design* way of working. It’s easy to make good designs; it’s easy to make functional products; it’s easy to make products of good quality; it’s easy to make products with a minimal environmental impact; it’s easy to make low price products. But it’s difficult to do all this within the same product. That was our core thinking when working with the second IKEA PS collection, and it’s now the way of working for everything we do.

WHY I LOVE WORKING AT IKEA

The freedom to explore, and to be able to make products that affect our customers in a positive way all over the world.

WHAT INSPIRES ME

First time experiences and difficulties...I guess it’s related to freedom. To be able to indulge oneself and explore and choose untouched ground. To then have an effect and leave one’s mark, whether it’s on products, ideas, pristine snow or life... Difficulties are challenging. Or to be more exact – finding simple solutions to difficult problems is challenging.

A FAVOURITE IKEA PROJECT

Currently I’m working on a project where we are exploring the possibility of using paper for all sorts of affordable products. Is it possible to make beautiful everyday objects with recycled paper...a sofa made of egg cartons...who knows! Lots of crazy ideas at the moment, and most of them never leave the sketching table – but they could lead to other ideas and new paths, as long as we are open to them and let the ideas live and flourish!

HOW IKEA CAN STAY INNOVATIVE

By continuing to be curious and by making brave decisions and daring to let it happen.

* Democratic Design is the IKEA approach of always considering form, function, quality, sustainability, and low price in order to make better everyday products for more people.