

DESIGN • SPACE • LIFE

# cubes

*TOM DIXON*

*BALANCING BARN  
BY MVRDV*

*AN ART COLLECTOR'S  
LOFT BY UNSTUDIO*

*DESIGNERS AT  
ARCHIFEST 2010*



*Spatial  
Encounter*

The Architecture



8 886385 903073

DEC/JAN 2010/11 | \$58.00

# Back to Basics

Norm Architects peels back the skin of an old house to reveal a reconstruction of rustic simplicity bathed in quiet light

Text by Luo Jingmei Photography by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen



**MOST DESIGNERS WOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT** attaching a style to their work however *Norm Architects* is hardly hesitant about declaring its works as minimalist.

The origin of minimalism, purposefully reducing a work to its most fundamental elements, is heroic, but it takes a master's hand to breathe maturity into the refining process. "As architects we have a certain eye for clean spaces and order," *Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen*, one of the two partners heading Norm Architects, expounds. "But we also find that many modern minimalist interiors seem very cold and are primarily created for the eye. We try to incorporate all the human senses in our approach to design. Therefore we also consider how the spaces we design sound, how they feel, etc."

The works of Norm Architects bear a functionalism that is quintessentially Dutch, but also one that is softened with the Nordic pursuit of sunlit spaces and honest expression of natural materials.





**CONCRETE MEASURES:**  
*Resurfaced concrete floors  
unify the first storey into a  
continuous fluid space*

# Inspiration came from the raw materials of the original house



Founded only recently in 2008 by design principal *Kasper Rønn*, award-winning studio Norm Architects has amassed a portfolio of works comprising residential architecture, interior design and industrial design. Both Rønn and his partner from the *Royal Danish Academy of Art and Design* have done work on furniture design, and have done so in collaboration with product designer *Ole Palsby*. Rønn's design philosophy is inspired by Bjerre-Poulsen's art and philosophy, which is rooted in a solid practical base and a quest for balance.

One project that exemplifies this philosophy is the *Artist House* in coastal Humlebæk. Situated in green fields fronting the ocean, the house was designed for artist *Julie von Lotzbeck* and her young family. It is a sanctuary, "a place with surroundings to be inspired by".

With the site settled, requirements for the house were simple. Previously a workers' housing block, it was to be reworked to function as a modern home. "The family wanted a durable home that could withstand wear and tear of everyday life...something that was simple but with beautiful inspiring natural surroundings. We wanted to open it up and get full advantage of the site," says Bjerre-Poulsen. "The job was really about how to take away". This proved to be a challenge for those whose reductive philosophy fell in line with the client's.

←  
**LEAN EARTH:**  
Earthy, rustic elements  
are paired with  
contemporary fittings  
for the right balance

↓  
**LIGHTWELL:**  
The staircase  
second storey  
light into  
storey below

