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Point of View



Scandinavian NEW WAVE

Swedish interior design firm *Halleroed*, founded by *Christian and Ruxandra Halleröd*, has established itself as a visionary force in *Scandinavian-inspired* luxury retail and personal spaces.

Every artist is shaped, influenced, and inspired by their environment. This concept rings particularly true for Christian and Ruxandra Halleröd, the Stockholm-based design duo behind the interiors firm Halleroed. The rich forests, lush lakes, and roaring mountains of Sweden inspire their work implicitly, as does the country's history of distinctly minimalist, stylish, and practical interiors.

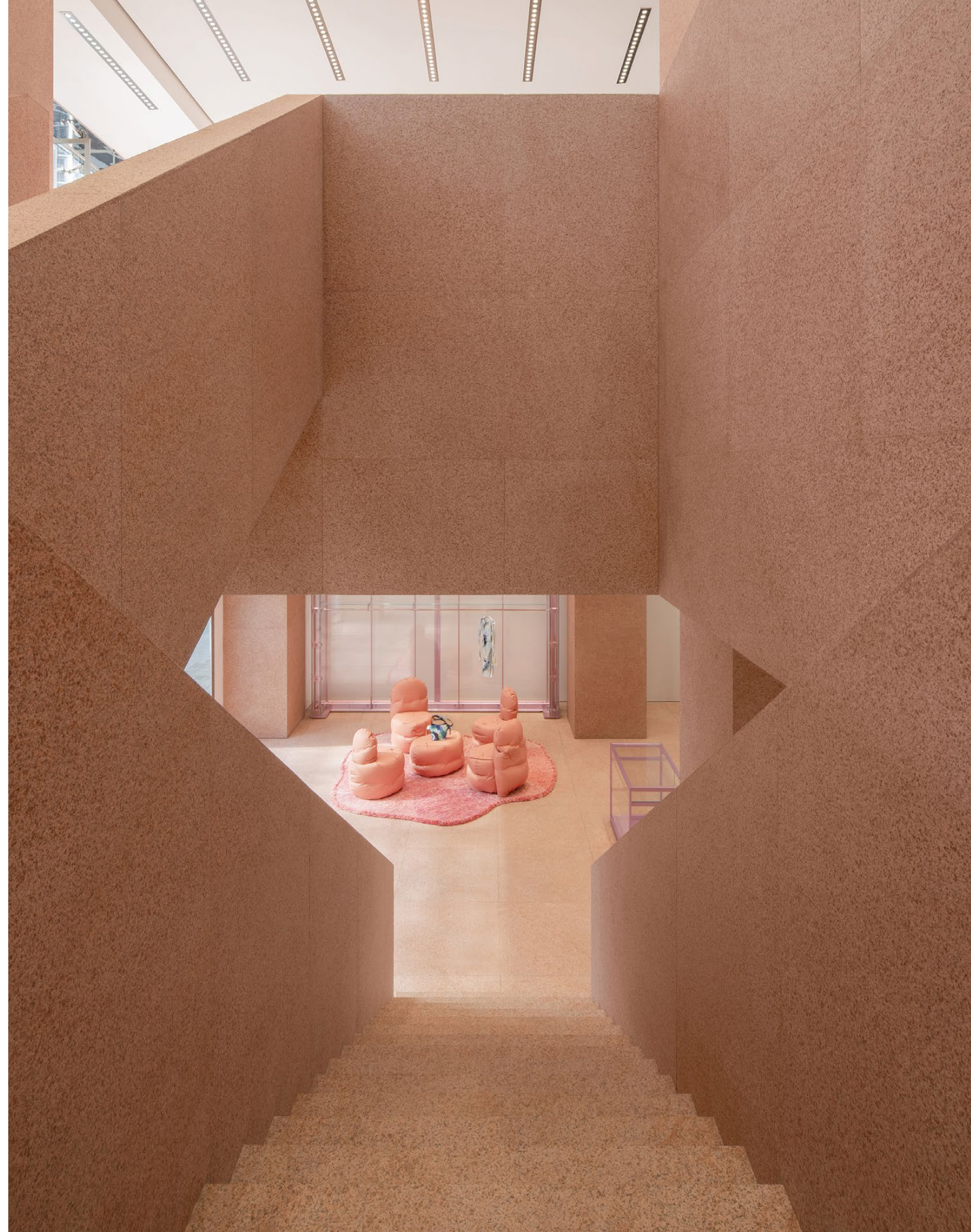
While attending the Swedish art and craft school Carl Malmstensskolan, Christian, now 50, learned cabinet making and furniture design. Throughout his studies, he continued to travel, discovering the big names in 1990s fashion—Comme des Garçons, Margiela, and Helmut Lang among them—and their interiors.

Ruxandra, now 43, split her architecture studies between Stockholm and Porto while flying everywhere from Moscow to Los Angeles. She remembers a particular trip to France,

where she was able to visit a Le Corbusier townhouse. "Despite its very bad state, the ideas were still strong and timeless," she says. Fascinated by the lines of contemporary architecture, she proposed a "post-collective" graduation project—an urban planning project in Pitesti, her hometown in Romania, for which she and her partner studied how the cities of Romania changed during the Communist era, and what happened when the system collapsed.

"We do not have a specific aesthetic, but we have a way of thinking and working with customers and projects that, in the end, is perhaps recognizable as Halleroed," Ruxandra and Christian note. "As we work with very different brands, we try to understand them and find a language that corresponds to their very specific physical environments. We work with fewer but more precise elements and materials and try to make them as visually strong as possible. Maybe it's a Lutheran way of thinking that is very Swedish." It's all about connection:

By LAURE AMBROISE





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They use materials in the most effective way possible, and pay close attention to the relationships between every material they introduce to a space. “We obviously love wood, but we are always interested in discovering how to use existing materials in new ways,” Ruxandra says. Examples of Halleroed’s experimentation with materials include a blue glazed lava stone reception desk at a New York office, abstract leather panels, transparent resin fixtures, floor-to-ceiling carpet at Acne Studios in China, and pink aluminum. “Some say we have an eye for combining colors and materials. We try to



create unexpected interiors and provide a pleasant experience for the people who will frequent them.”

For Halleroed’s partners around the world—Acne Studios (Stockholm, Paris, Miami, Melbourne, Singapore, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Chengdu), L/Uniform (Paris), Toteme (Shanghai, New York, and London), Byredo (Los Angeles and Stockholm), Frame (Los Angeles), and Khaite (at Bergdorf Goodman in New York)—one wonders what they enjoy most in the exercise of realizing their unique, symbiotic spaces. “Exploring the same idea in different places requires us to be more specific about what is important to the brand and concept. It is also nice to see that everything is not generic, and that everything is not the same wherever you are. We always try to avoid being generic; it is boring and commercial and uninteresting to the client. It’s also interesting to understand what you want to bring from your roots and what you want to explore in the country or city where the project takes place.”

As for what’s next, the duo would love to transform a small hotel or work with Belgian fashion designer Raf Simons. Every project has an inspiration, but it also has a narrative. “It can also be called analysis and strategy,” they say. “Or simply understanding. We like to understand the brand or person we work for and build an imaginary physical world around them that consists of an idea or an atmosphere. It’s more relevant than telling stories. For us, the narrative is more superficial.”

LEFT—L/Uniform boutique in Paris.
 ABOVE—Christian and Ruxandra Halleröd at their offices in Stockholm.
 OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP—An office in New York; the Acne Studios boutique, Singapore; the Frame store in Los Angeles.
 PREVIOUS PAGE—Acne Studios boutique, Shenzhen. Photos courtesy of Halleroed.

