Culture

Palette in the sky: Recrafting an aircraft cabin

Dutch product designer explains how the solid business class for KLM

BY ALLIE KENTISH

Like many successful designers whose chairs, tables and other furniture command a high price, his work is out of reach for the average pockets. But like any good designer, Christiaan van de Vrie is constantly looking for ways to make his work more accessible to a broader audience. And as it turns out, that means designing more for KLM.

"Our focus is on creating furniture that is both functional and comfortable," says van de Vrie, who works closely with KLM's creative director, Bart van den Berg, on nearly every aspect of the airline's design language. "We want our chairs to be not only functional, but also visually appealing in an airport setting."

Van de Vrie's latest project is a series of chairs for KLM's new business class, which will debut on flights to Europe later this year. The chairs feature a unique frame structure that allows them to be easily moved from one seat to another, making them ideal for passengers who wish to stretch their legs or relax during long flights.

The design team worked closely with the airline to ensure that the chairs met all of KLM's safety requirements while still maintaining a sense of style and sophistication. "We wanted to create something that was both comfortable and practical," van de Vrie says. "And we think we've done just that."