

Copenhagen
**The
Good
Life**

*In a city
renowned for
design, craft
artists have
it made.*

STORY BY
Joann Plockova



The Danish capital, with more than three-quarters of a million residents, enjoys a reputation as an easygoing, bike-friendly city with government support for the arts.



ABOVE: American transplant Eric Landon has thoroughly absorbed the Danish craft ethos, manifest in his Tortus boutique and workshop.

RIGHT: Landon grew up in Milwaukee but has called Copenhagen home for the past 18 years. The potter is known for his sophisticated vessels, workshops, and Instagram account with more than 700,000 followers.



Tortus' complex includes Landon's private studio (top right) and a workshop for pottery students who come from around the world.

CALLED THE WORLD'S HAPPIEST, most livable city, Copenhagen offers a quality of life that keeps its makers happy and healthy. Abundant green space, striking architecture, a colorful harbor, and shops, hotels, and cafés that embody *hygge* ("coziness," "a welcoming warmth") mean the compact Danish capital packs a cultural punch. It's also home to the renowned postwar Danish design tradition, which was established by giants such as Arne Jacobsen and Hans Wegner. Revered for its simplicity, the tradition was built on a history of fine craft that continues to this day. Just browse the shops and artisanal boutiques that line Copenhagen's streets – many with hip-level windows offering a peek into collective workshops – to see how.



Overleaf (street photo): Martin Heiberg, Copenhagen Media Center / Overleaf (store photo) and other photos (2): Eric Landon



TOP: Tortus' minimalist Unika series explores scale, shape, and color.

ABOVE: Landon's elegant vessels perfectly complement Scandinavian-modern furniture in the Tortus showroom.

Just around the corner from Christiansborg Palace is Tortus, a ceramic boutique and teaching studio in an 18th-century house with striking green window frames. Its inviting inner courtyard, filled with climbing flora and potted plants, leads to a second building where Tortus co-founder Eric Landon has his private studio. Landon, who prefers to work at the patient pace of a tortoise, for which the studio is named, has called Copenhagen home for 18 years. What's kept him there? "There is really amazing food, architecture, beautiful bridges. Design is everywhere. And [there's] the bike infrastructure." (Thanks to 250 miles of bike paths, half of Copenhageners choose bikes over cars.)

Originally from Milwaukee, Landon first learned pottery in high school. He went on to study economics at Xavier University in Ohio but missed the wheel. "I had pottery in the back of my head the whole time," he admits. So when he moved to Copenhagen in 1999 with his then-wife and started making again at one of Copenhagen's myriad community centers, he "couldn't give it up."

Now the 41-year-old runs Tortus with his business and life partner, Susanne Jensen; the couple have two children, ages 3 and 4. His work takes him from the shop, where he sells his sophisticated one-of-a-kind vessels, to the upstairs studio, where he assists students from all over the world, to his spacious private studio out back, where he works at the wheel, fires the kiln, and joins his students for lunch at a long farmer's table. "It is our own little village," Landon says, "a refuge in the city. It is a nice environment to be creative in."

Landon graduated from the Danish Design School (now the



Thomas Hoyrup Christensen, Copenhagen Media Center



Rasmus Hjortshøj



Okay Images



Niklas Adrian Vindelev

TOP: Nyhavn, lined with 17th- and 18th-century buildings, is a short walk from Designmuseum Danmark.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Goldfingers lead designers Karl Ejnar Nybo and Janne K. Hansen. Hansen's *Behind Closed Ears* brooch (right) is an example of their avant-garde approach to jewelry.

Brooch photo: Kenneth Øksnebjerg

Tapestry photo: Ole Akhøj

ABOVE: Amelie Tillgren, part of weavers' collective Væveværkstedet, made this piece in 2015.

TOP, ABOVE: Architects Mads-Ulrik Husum and Sine Lindholm used their residency at the Danish Art Workshop to develop Growroom, an urban farming project.

Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts) in 2008 and found initial success exhibiting concept-driven work abroad. But he “grew tired of the glass boxes” in galleries that walled off his work and wanted to focus his energy on creating “a product out in the real world, something people can relate to,” he says. So, in 2012, he co-founded Tortus with his brother, Justin.

At the beginning, Landon did well producing wares for leading retailers; Tortus vessels were available in 18 countries within two years. But the machine-like routine took its toll. It wasn't until he followed his brother's advice and set up an Instagram account, @tortus, that he found the kind of success he was seeking. Selling directly to enthusiasts online, by commission, and in the shop soon opened the door to teaching gigs. In turn, diversifying his business gave him the financial stability and time to experiment creatively and make one-of-a-kind vessels, satisfying his need for creative expression.

“The way I communicate is very un-Danish,” Landon says of his Instagram efforts, which are a departure from the subtler Scandinavian way of doing things – and they've paid off. The potter has more than 700,000 followers; his captivating process videos have been featured in the *Huffington Post*.

Landon leads a few week-long workshops each month in his studio. He also spends several months a year teaching in Australia, and in the US, where he plans to open a studio in a few years. But when he's back home, he embraces the city. “Copenhagen is pretty laid-back. No one is ever in a hurry here. People work to live, not live to work.”

✦ *Joann Plockova is a design and travel writer based in Prague.*

WIDE WORLD OF CRAFT



OeO,
Ferdinand
Lounge
Chair, 2014



Henrik Vibskov, Face Dress, 2015



Cecilie Manz, Caravaggio, 2005



Flavio
Deslandes,
Bamboo
Comfort,
2009



Nicholai Wiig Hansen,
Geothermosjug, 2014



Thomas Bentzen,
Don't Leave Me side table, 2007

If You Go

City Center

A mix of narrow cobblestoned streets, busy shopping areas, and the city's signature red-brick architecture, Copenhagen's cultural and historic center is a hot spot for craft.

Start at **Goldfingers**, the gallery and workshop led by Janne K. Hansen and Karl Ejnar Nybo. Handmade from fair-trade metals, their collections are a refined balance of poetry and punk.

From there, cross over Strøget (one of Europe's longest pedestrian shopping streets) to the bite-size shop of everyday-porcelain designer **Ditte Fischer**. Her signature leaf-shaped vases, hanging pots, bowls, and jewelry exemplify Scandinavian simplicity at its finest. Ceramic studio **Tortus**,

co-founded by American transplant Eric Landon, is down the street in a timber-frame building. Look for Landon's elegant vessels in the lower shop windows.

Just around the corner is the studio and gallery of jewelry artist **Kim Buck**, who makes conventional work as well as whimsical pieces such as inflatable gold-foil brooches in the shape of hearts.

Bordering the canal at Slotsholmen Island is **Baerbar** jewelry gallery and shop, led by artist Trine Trier. Also in the area: **Butik for Borddaekning**, a showroom and exhibition space featuring handmade tableware by designer-craftspeople.

1. Goldfingers
Klosterstræde 18
goldfingers.dk

2. Ditte Fischer
Læderstræde 14
dittefischer.dk

3. Tortus
Kompagnistræde 23
tortus-copenhagen.com

4. Kim Buck
Rådhusstræde 10
kimbuck.dk

5. Baerbar
Nybrogade 26
baerbar.dk

6. Butik for Borddaekning
Møntergade 6
butikforborddaekning.dk

Christianshavn

Grab a bike and cycle past the colorful waterfront houses of Nyhavn and over the new Inderhavnsbroen (the Inner Harbor bike bridge) to this maritime area built by Christian IV.

On the docks, adjacent to the Danish Architecture Center, the Statens Vaerksteder For Kunst (Danish Art Workshops or DAW) has six spacious floors of studios supported by large, well-equipped workshops for clay, metal, wood, and textiles. The DAW, a project of the Danish Ministry of Culture, offers residencies that give makers the space to work on projects of a particularly demanding

size or scope. Past residents include architects Sine Lindholm and Mads-Ulrik Husum, who built Growroom, an open-source, urban farming project. You can take a peek inside on open studio days and during artist talks.

7. Danish Art Workshops
Strandgade 27B
svfk.dk

Frederiksstaden

For a comprehensive overview of Danish craft and design, spend an hour or two at the **Designmuseum Danmark**, housed in an 18th-century former hospital. The museum's permanent exhibitions include "20th-Century Crafts & Design" and "Danish Design Now," which features innovative design ranging from fashion to furniture. Next door is the Danish Crafts & Design Association's **Officinet**, a contemporary exhibition space focusing on the overlap of architecture, craft, and design.

8. Designmuseum Danmark
Bredgade 68
designmuseum.dk

9. Officinet
Bredgade 66
dkod.dk/officinet

Vesterbro

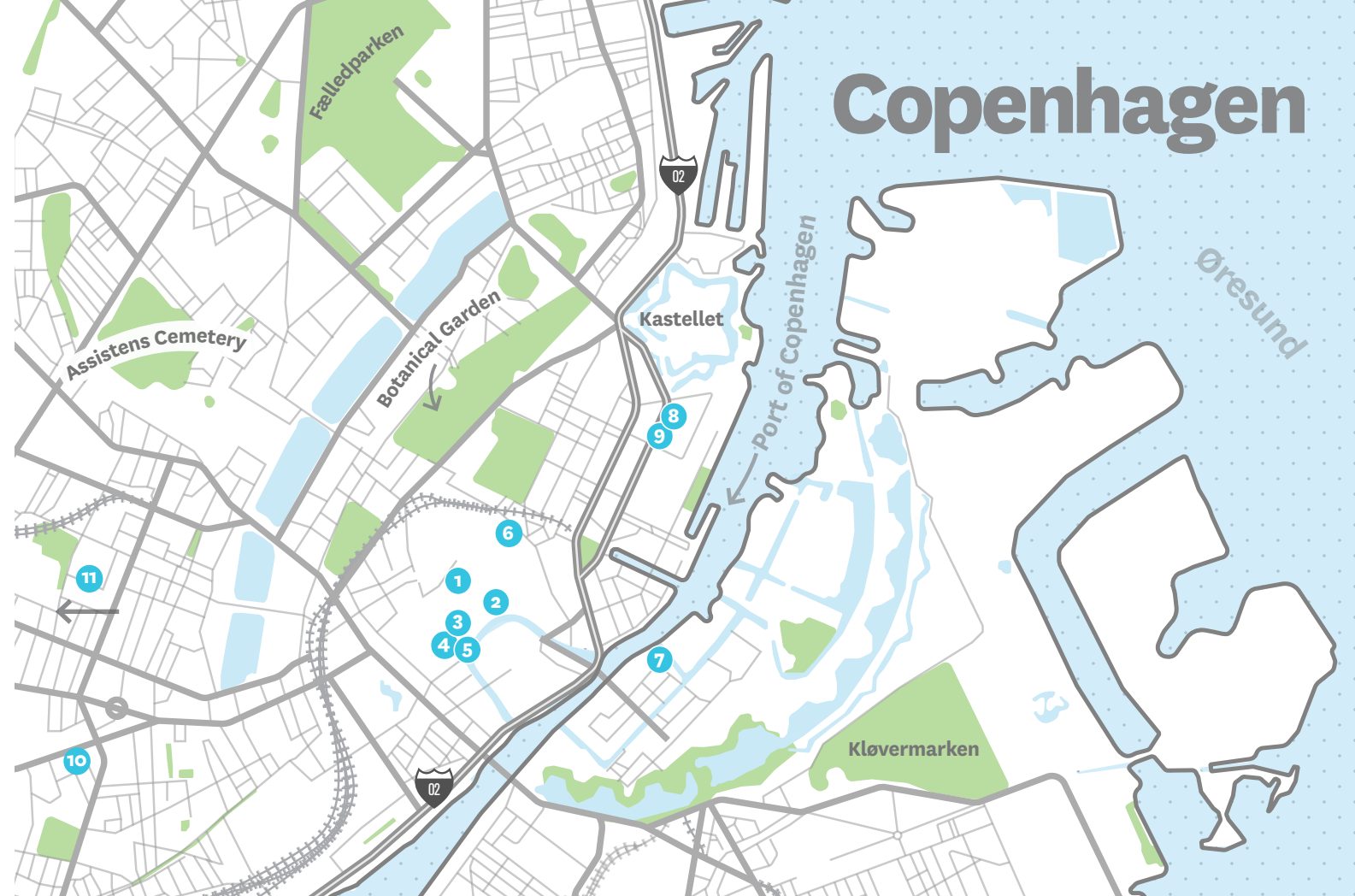
Once a working-class neighborhood, this is now one of Copenhagen's trendiest districts. Along with cafés, restaurants, boutiques, and studios, Vesterbro is home to **Designer Zoo**, a one-of-kind hub for Danish craft. Founded in 1999, the two-floor retail gallery features one of the country's largest selections of glass, ceramics, textiles, and jewelry, and includes workshops visible to shoppers.

10. Designer Zoo
Vesterbrogade 137
dzoo.dk

Frederiksberg

Full of green space, this upscale neighborhood is described as a city within the city. Stop by weavers' collective **Væveværkstedet** in a former car-repair workshop, today filled with looms. Makers Pia Jensen, Amelie Tillgren, Berthe Forchammer, and Ida Kornrup will happily chat about the Copenhagen scene over a cup of coffee. Stop by on the first Saturday of every month from September through May, when the collective's space is open to the public.

11. Væveværkstedet
Smallegade 52D
vaevevaerkstedet.dk



Chair photo: Brdr. Krüger / Bike photo: Franz Henriksen / Jug photo: Normann Copenhagen / Dress photo: Pernille Klemp, Designmuseum Danmark

Light photo: Lightyears / Table photo: HAY / Map: Chelsea Hammerbeck