

AXEL ENTHOVEN

by KURT VANBELLEGHEM





1979

BOVA FUTURA — BUS

The Bova Futura bus was designed in 1979 by Axel Enthoven in collaboration with Ton Baeten. The Dutch bus manufacturer VDL Groep began production in 1981, ceasing 31 years later, after 11,218 units of the Bova Futura had been made. The main design updates were named Futura 2 (1988) and Futura 3 (1998). The bus is manufactured under licence in China by Zhongtong Bus Holding. The design won several awards, including the 1986 RAI Coach of the Year Award, the 1995 KIDP Good Design Award, the 2001 Design Prestige Prize of the Design Centre of the Czech Republic, and the prestigious Red Dot Award that same year.

The Bova Futura bus can easily be seen as the most innovative product that I ever put on the market because this bus really provoked a big shock in the field of bus construction. It is a unique story, the design remaining almost unchanged for 31 years.

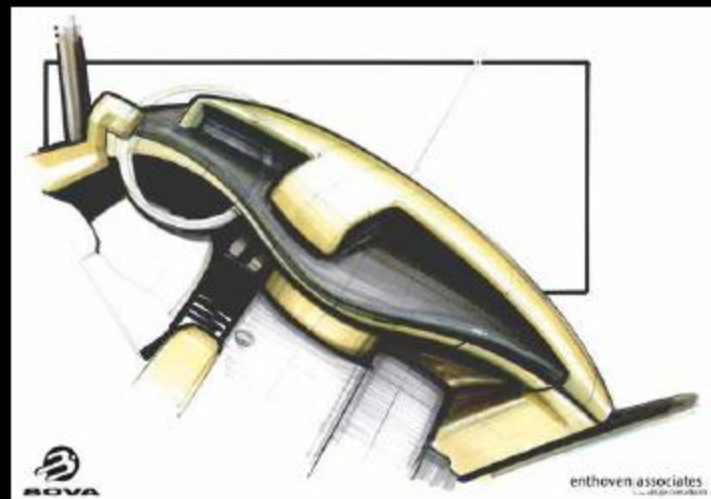
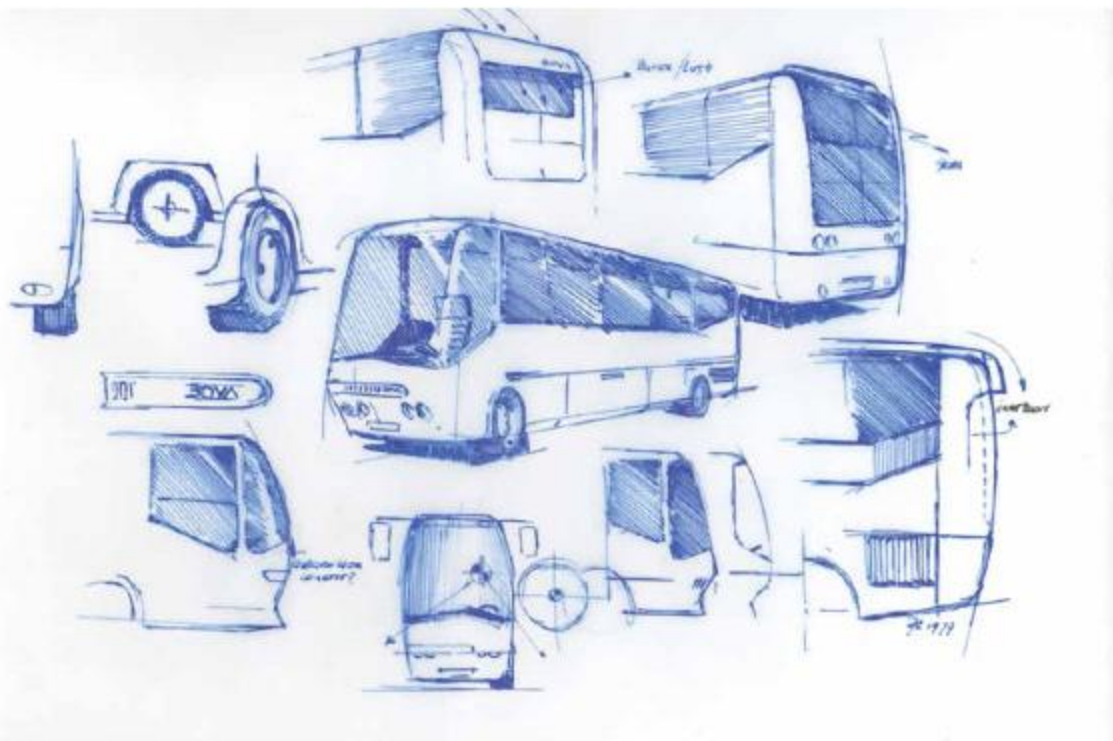
Axel Enthoven

Axel's strength lay in the fact that he really immerses himself in the corporate situation, that is to say, not only in the object itself. He thought with us about how we could further approach it as a company. We were strongly focused on the national level and Axel wasn't. He let us see what possibilities there were.

Ish de Rooij, Manager concept development, VDL Groep

The two owners of the company VDL Groep who had to evaluate the Bova Futura bus put me in the most nerve-racking situation of my career when I presented the project as a scale model. They spent exactly 28 minutes and 22 seconds studying the model without saying a single word. I felt myself getting smaller and smaller. Then, out of nowhere, they suddenly said, 'Let's go for it!'

Axel Enthoven



enthoven associates
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My father was a furniture maker and was very interested in woodwork and particular constructions. Axel was a very young designer who wanted to prove himself and I was an ambitious fellow in the marketing and sales department of my father's company. It is out of that mix of knowledge and energy that the Bora Bora was born.

Jeroen Sanders, Director of Leolux from 1981 until 2009.



The Bora Bora is a very elegant product with a high level of seating comfort which contained hardly any volume, so that no unnecessary quantities of foam had to be fitted in it. It was in fact an ecological product before it became fashionable.

Jeroen Sanders, Director of Leolux from 1981 until 2009



I designed a chair that was very difficult to make but with which he could very clearly demonstrate his craft. I really wanted to sublimate their skill, which is why we also called it Opus. I have to say that it is one of the most puristic chairs that I have ever designed.

Axel Enthoven

This chair was kept affordable because it had to radiate other added values and because of the commercial policy. The chair was never sold in shops, but straight from the manufacturer, and 30 years ago this was unprecedented.

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