

Kongelys® anno 2024

Design Niels Rasmussen Thykier 1930

T3/Kongelys®, Danish design.
Good light for all through generations
- even for kings.



T3/Kongelys® anno 1930

Picture section from Niels Rasmussen Thykier's brochure from 1930

Niels Rasmussen Thykier 1883-1978



Thykier, Hagemann's Dormitory 1908

The father of the Kongelys® lamp was the sculptor Niels Rasmussen Thykier. But how did he get the idea to embark on lamp production? The occasion was his father-in-law Wilhelm Kruse's 70th birthday in 1928. Thykier wanted to give a good, personal gift. He therefore crafted a table lamp made of patinated copper plate with a chiseled base. Wilhelm Kruse was so delighted with it that he encouraged Thykier to begin production of the lamp. Thykier took the suggestion to heart.

The table lamp for Wilhelm Kruse, designated T1, was only made as a single piece and was followed by the T2 table lamp. Not many T2 lamps were produced before a new T3 Major was developed. This table lamp, with a 40 cm diameter shade, was produced in larger quantities, and soon after, the most popular model, the T3 Minor with a 37 cm diameter shade, was ready for mass production in 1930. Thykier manufactured his lamps on Gladsaxe Møllevvej, now called Møllemarken, in Bagsværd.

He never compromised on the quality of design, lighting, or craftsmanship. Base, stand etc. were made of solid brass, and the transparent shades were crafted from cardboard that, through a special oil treatment, gained a uniquely tactile quality. The shades were available in different versions: solid-colored in light natural tones, or decorated by, among others, sculptor and professor E. Utzon-Frank, painter and ceramicist Jais Nielsen, or painters Harald Hansen and Mogens Lorentzen.

Niels Rasmussen Thykier - Lamp Manufacturer

It was not predestined that Thykier would become a lamp manufacturer; it was one of the many social leaps he took in his life. Niels was one of eleven children on a smallholder's farm in Kni Mark. As a child, he worked as a herder boy and received almost no formal schooling. After his confirmation, Niels apprenticed in a drapery shop in Thisted.

Driven by a lifelong urge to create, to pursue knowledge, art, and culture, Niels Rasmussen Thykier took a leap and attended the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, the painting school, the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and again the Academy's sculpture school. At G.A. Hagemann's dormitory, Thykier met his wife, Ellen Kruse, a medical student.



Self-portrait, sketch 1970

Much of Thykier's life unfolded during periods of great hardship: World War I, the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, and World War II. These were tough times for most, but for artists, it was nearly impossible to earn a living. Thykier was a skilled portrait painter, but the clientele who could afford his work often made demands that clashed with his sense of good art.

The leap to lamp manufacturing was a way to secure a necessary income while also offering an opportunity to design, create, invent, and learn. It never became a large-scale factory production but rather a craft-based operation, with Thykier as the master who could do everything—and preferred to do it all himself. This was not far removed from being a sculptor.

The lamp manufacturing business was never a major financial success, but as Thykier lived extremely frugally his entire life, it was enough to build three properties on Gladsaxe Møllevvej, now Møllemarken. All three properties have been declared worthy of preservation and are protected through a local plan.



Thykiers' painting of the living room at Hagemann's College, 1911.

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Success often comes late. Now, a century after it was painted, Thykier's painting from the common room at Hagemann's College has been sold at auction in London for a very high amount, and the original T3 lamps are also fetching high prices.

Niels Rasmussen Thykier created a lamp in 1930 that was produced as originals and copies for many years and is now, 94 years later, being relaunched. While Thykier was alive and producing his T3 lamps, he knew how to capitalize on Fog & Mørup's strong marketing of Kongelys®. The T3 was a superior design, and he could sell everything he produced because he attracted quality-conscious customers, institutions, and private buyers.

The table lamp has often been featured in Danish films and TV series, such as *Den forsvundne fuldmægtig* (1971), *Matador* (1978–1981), *Edderkoppen* (2000), and *Kongekabale* (2004). The T3 work lamp also adorns Niels Bohr's "museum office" at the Niels Bohr Institute.

T3 and Kongelys®

The T3 table lamp, designed by Niels Rasmussen Thykier, was completed in 1930 and initially distributed by wholesaler Holger Grum in Kronprinsensgade. During the 1930s, demand grew, and Thykier began collaborating with lamp manufacturer Fog & Mørup, which took over the marketing of Thykier's lamp.

In 1937, Fog & Mørup staged a marketing stunt to mark King Christian X's 25th jubilee. The king was gifted a copy of Thykier's T3 table lamp, which Fog & Mørup named "Kongelys" (Royal Light).

In their 1937/38 catalog, both the T3 Minor and Kongelys were featured, with Kongelys® being Fog & Mørup's self-produced copy of the T3 Minor. Both table lamps were made in burnished brass, typical of the era.

Thykier's T3 table lamps were of significantly higher quality than Fog & Mørup's Kongelys®. Thykier instructed his dealers to always price the T3 Minor 2 kroner higher than the Kongelys®, incentivizing sellers to emphasize the T3's superior quality, craftsmanship, fine details, and high-quality materials.

Fog & Mørup began producing Kongelys® around 1937, reportedly under an agreement with Thykier. According to Thykier's son, architect Anders Thykier, and grandson, architect Carsten Thykier, a royalty agreement existed, which Fog & Mørup later breached. The details of this agreement are unknown. In his later years, Thykier expressed bitterness over Fog & Mørup's failure to pay royalties. Later producers of Kongelys®, Lyskær-LYFA and Horn Belysning, also did not pay royalties to the Thykier family. Thykier and Fog & Mørup successfully produced their respective versions side by side until the late 1950s. During this period, Thykier entrusted the marketing and distribution of his T3 lamp to "Den Permanente."

Horn Belysning relaunches Kongelys®

Fog & Mørup was acquired by Lyfa in early 1978. In the 1970s, Fog & Mørup developed a larger version of Kongelys® with an acrylic shade, which Horn Belysning took over in 1991.

King Christian X received a Kongelys lamp in 1937, and in 2000, Queen Margrethe was gifted a numbered copy of the larger version for her 60th birthday (no. 1 of a maximum of 500 numbered copies). To mark the Crown Prince couple's wedding in 2004, Horn Belysning continued the lamp's royal tradition, launching the larger version in brushed steel. The Crown Prince couple's table lamp was the first in a numbered series of up to 500 copies, uniquely engraved with their royal monogram on a plaque under the base. However, the larger Kongelys® was not a commercial success for Horn Belysning.

In 2010, Delite, through EM Belysning in Viborg, acquired all of Horn Belysning's rights to Kongelys®.

In 2024, Delite entered into a royalty agreement with the Thykier family.



T3 Minor table lamp

Design: Niels Rasmussen Thykier 1930. Produced by the designer from 1930 until the end of the 1950s. The built-in switch was a special feature on all of Thykier's table lamps.



Kongelys® copy produced by Fog & Mørup in the late 1930s.

It was a cheaper version of Niels Rasmussen Thykier's T3 Minor table lamp, which, at the time, by mutual agreement, was sold alongside it.



Kongelys® table lamp (the large)

With opal white ø45cm acrylic shade, design: Lyskær-LYFA 1990.
With matt opal white ø45cm glass shade, design: Horn Belysning 2000.

Kongelys® Comes to Life Again in 2024



Personally, I have always been driven by a fascination with fine craftsmanship. In the context of Delite, this means producing high-quality products. In other contexts, I can be captivated by well-crafted articles, books, or films of great artistic or cultural-historical value. So, it's no surprise that I was thrilled when we at Delite got the opportunity to restart the production of the Kongelys® lamp. The fact that the introduction year, 2024, also happens to be the year Crown Prince Frederik became king is purely coincidental.

Kongelys® is a prime example of a quality product; timeless with its simple, beautiful design and excellent lighting. The surface on which Kongelys® stands is uniformly and well-lit, and the transparent, opal-white shade simultaneously provides pleasant illumination to the surrounding space. It creates an inviting atmosphere around the lamp. The high quality of the light is ensured with a warm color temperature of 2700K and a color rendering index (Ra) of 90.

Peter S. Jessen, 2024

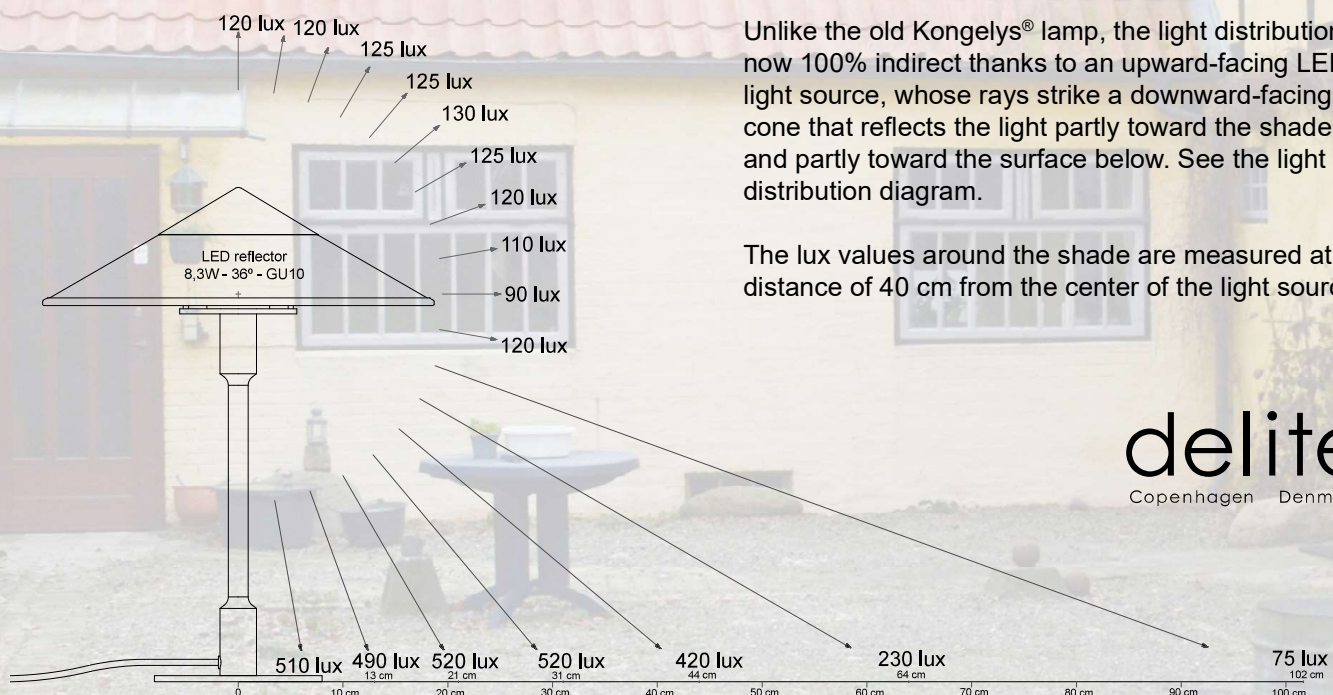
Kongelys® 2024 - polished stainless steel - shade diameter $\varnothing 37\frac{1}{2}$ cm.
Height 46 cm - weight approx. 2,4 kg.
Article no. 740102 - recommended retail price EUR 670,-

The Relaunch of the Original, Timeless, and Ever-Modern Kongelys®

At Delite, we wanted to relaunch the Kongelys® table lamp with respect for the original T3 design while incorporating the advantages enabled by new technology. A lot has changed since 1930. LED light sources have become dominant. In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, the light source was a 40W bulb. Now, with new LED lighting, an energy consumption of just 8.3W achieves even better illumination of the table surface.

Architect Carsten Thykier, designer Rune Balle Olsen, and I reviewed the design and discussed details to make the Kongelys®, as it now appears, even better. It is more faithful to Thykier's original design but includes important Peter S. Jessen detail improvements, such as a more robust opal-white acrylic shade protected by a decorative ring and an embedded O-ring at the base of the foot, which protects the surface and ensures a non-slip grip. The decorative ring, lamp base, stem, stay holder, and stays are all made of stainless steel.

It was decided that the traditional switch integrated into the lamp's base was outdated, and the design would be simpler without one. Modern technology, with mobile apps and other remote control solutions, offers a wealth of possibilities for customized on/off functionality. However, an optional switch on the cord is provided, maintaining the simple on/off function.



Unlike the old Kongelys® lamp, the light distribution is now 100% indirect thanks to an upward-facing LED light source, whose rays strike a downward-facing cone that reflects the light partly toward the shade and partly toward the surface below. See the light distribution diagram.

The lux values around the shade are measured at a distance of 40 cm from the center of the light source.

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Copenhagen Denmark