

Out of the studio, into the . . . spotlight



Nick Visser is special projects editor at Wallpaper* magazine

Michael Anastassiades Onyx lamp



Anastassiades trained as an engineer before taking a masters degree in industrial design at London's Royal College of Art. He specialises in pieces that straddle the worlds of art and design, creating limited edition lighting.

furniture, jewellery and tabletop objects in collaboration with skilled artisans. He also takes special commissions, including a chandelier for the Aghia Sophia Cathedral in London and lighting for Stockholm's Grand Hotel, and avant-garde fashion designer Hussein Chalayan and artists Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby have asked him to design sets for fashion shows and special projects. Anastassiades describes his perfectly proportioned pieces as "minimal, utilitarian and almost mundane yet full of a vitality". There is a richness and elegance to his work, thanks at least in part to the precious materials he uses - mainly bronze, copper, silver, crystal and marble. For the London Design Festival, he will show this new lamp, carved out of a solid chunk of Pakistani white onyx, among other pieces at his studio. Onyx has "a very high quartz content" and carving it makes it "very translucent, allowing the light through to catch every vein in all the different colours". It is glorious in its simplicity. £1,300 www.michaelanastassiades.com



Todd Bracher Marblewood candlestick



Good design and corporate social responsibility are the ambitious aims of Mater, which launched at Maison et Objet and will show at Townhouse DK during the London Design Festival. The Copenhagen-based

company wants to create timeless, beautiful home accessories with production that adheres to eco-friendly practices and supports local people and traditional crafts in India, China and Vietnam. "Some products have a small environmental bearing; others consume finite resources in vast quantities and are produced under abusive labour conditions," says Henrik Marstrand, founder and chief executive. He wants consumers to start buying only the former, including the Marblewood collection by Bracher. The bowls, candlesticks and candelabras are made of turned components in black or white Jaipur marble or Indian shisham wood. Bracher came up with the idea after visiting Indian artisans in workshops and noticing that their cut-offs included small chips of marble. By collecting and combining them, he has not only created strikingly graphic "conical forms" but also used waste material and provided extra income for the craftsmen. Dkr 5,000 (€690) www.materdesign.com



Richard Schultz Swell seating



Outdoor furniture was given a dedicated hall at Maison et Objet for the first time this season and B&B Italia's showing included an expanded range of a Schultz collection first produced by Knoll in 1986. Florence Knoll

hired the designer in 1961 to create "decent outdoor furniture", after seeing some pieces that she kept in Florida rust and corrode. Working alongside sculptor Harry Bertola, famed for his wire chairs, in the Knoll Planning Unit, Schultz came up with chaises longues, tables and chairs that are now classic examples of modernist 20th century design. Though the range was discontinued in 1986, Schultz and his architect son Peter started producing some pieces again in 1992 for the US market, taking advantage of technological improvements in finishes and materials to improve durability. B&B Italia embraced the collection in 2001, making a chair, sofa and an occasional table in all white, all black or black-and-white available to customers around the world. Swell comprises an armless chair and two-seater sofa in wider proportions than the originals, enabling buyers to create an outdoor living room without compromising on the original design. Purists will approve. €1,355 www.bebitalia.com



Ruud van Oosterhout Silence



In 1995, after graduating from the Royal Academy of Arts Arnhem, van Oosterhout set up RVO Design, creating interiors for offices, art galleries, restaurants and residences. In 2002 he launched Bruut (which is a play on his first name

and which in Dutch means brutal, strong or brave) to produce furniture and objects. His work is reductionist rather than minimal and stands in stark contrast to the highly expressive design currently coming out of the Netherlands. Aiming for "purity" and "honesty", he uses solid walnut and oak instead of veneer and produces everything domestically. "I very much want to collaborate with Dutch manufacturers," he says. "Too much production is disappearing abroad." For his latest products, launched at Maison et Objet, he turned to Royal Leerdam Crystal, a company that dates back to 1785. What you first notice about Silence, a series of four limited edition pieces, is the barely-there colour, a washed out pink. Van Oosterhout says he wanted to play with transparency and density (the crystal is 1cm thick in parts) to create variations in the shade. The shapes are inspired by a sleeping head on a pillow, hand blown, then cut just off centre on the base, to create different tilts. €1,100 www.bruutcrystal.com



Pia Wallén Ultrasilencer Special Edition



Skandium is celebrating the opening of its second London store with the global launch of the Ultrasilencer Special Edition vacuum cleaner. It is the product of a partnership between Swedish appliance giant

Electrolux and Stockholm-based designer Pia Wallén, who is best known for her carpets, boxes and place mats in felted wool. Asked to reinterpret one of the company's best-selling models, the Ultrasilencer, first introduced in 2002, she took its hallmark feature - very little noise - and developed a design that is "silent to the eyes". The matte white finish evokes "falling snow" while orange - the colour of poles used to mark paths during Swedish winters - on the power cable serves "as a warning of electricity". She has also included flash of her signature material, felt, around the foot. The project took two years because all the components are produced by different suppliers and Wallén insisted on white for not only the exterior but also the interior, including the dust bag. (It turns orange when it's full.) She hopes people who buy the device will display it rather than banishing it to the cupboard, as they do with most ugly and heridly coloured vacuum cleaners. "Why," she asks, "should they look like trailers?" £289 www.electrolux.com/specialedition

