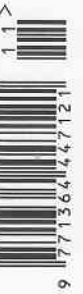


Wallpaper*

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A PEDESTRIAN-ONLY COMMUNITY BY STUDIO MK27 IN SOMOSAGUAS, MADRID, SEE PAGE 104



Empire line

A New York design duo tap a surprising art world secret to create objects of desire

'Objects of Common Interest started not with the idea to create a studio or commercial line, but as an exercise in small scale,' says Leonidas Trampoukis, one half of architecture practice LOT. Like many other architects, Trampoukis and LOT co-founder Eleni Petaloti were seduced by product design's relatively short journey from the concept to the concrete. Objects of Common Interest was borne of that seduction. 'It was an extension of working with architecture and making it more abstract,' adds Petaloti. 'We are interested in volumes and how they interact, creating abstract shapes and elements that become objects.'

The couple, who both studied at Thessaloniki's Aristotile and New York's Columbia universities, launched LOT in 2012, and landed a spot in Wallpaper's Architects' Directory two years later (W*184). The practice now maintains offices in Thessaloniki and New York and is best known for its *Flatiron Sky-Line*, a series of illuminated white steel arches temporarily installed on Manhattan's Flatiron Plaza in 2016. Other LOT projects include a Thessaloniki student residence, Corfu beach club and SoHo loft conversion.

ARCHITECT AND DESIGN DUO LEONIDAS TRAMPOUKIS AND ELENI PETALOTI WITH CRAFTSMAN OVIDIU COLEA AT HIS LONG ISLAND CITY WORKSHOP, WHERE HE HAS BEEN PRODUCING CAST-RESIN PIECES, SPANNING EMPIRE STATE BUILDING SOUVENIRS AND ART COLLABORATIONS, FOR OVER 30 YEARS

The pair launched their first Objects of Common Interest design collection in 2015 and insist that working on parallel projects, with different velocities, forces them to rethink both practices. But while their architectural output is based on simple shapes and essential lines, their design is focused on materiality and colour.

Unveiled at New York design gallery Matter, the inaugural collection included marble furniture, and polished copper mirrors for Mingardo. Most of the studio's objects are produced by small manufacturers in Greece and the US, using materials sourced by the couple. Their country of origin is a strong inspiration for their work, they say. 'The Greek influence brought out our sensibility for materials, light, texture and the feeling that an object evokes,' explains Trampoukis.

Titled *Relativity of Colour*, their latest collection focuses on chromatic compositions, loosely inspired by Josef Albers' theories and featuring modular pieces in glass and resin. The collection was created in collaboration with Romanian-born craftsman Ovidiu Colea, whose workshop Colbar Art, in Long Island >>

Design



LEFT, THE STUDIO'S RELATIVITY OF COLOUR SERIES COMPRISES 20 INTERCHANGEABLE ACRYLIC AND GLASS PIECES

BELOW, COLEA'S WORKSHOP, WITH SOME OF ITS STATUE OF LIBERTY SOUVENIRS SEEN IN THE MAKING

by blending them was the first level of this exercise.' The second level, she adds, was focused on the colour palette. Trampoukis and Petaloti created a dual palette, one ranging from nude to orange and through to red and deep brown, the other a colder range of shades, from light to dark blue. Then they worked with shapes in different hues to see how they interacted.

Although simple in its appearance and use, the collection is a multilayered exploration of form and colour. The series of tableware staples features a water glass, another small vessel that doubles as a champagne glass or matcha cup, a plate, a bowl and a vase – all very ordinary, everyday objects, the architects note. In this collection, gesture and composition are important elements that go hand in hand: each vessel, made of handblown glass produced in the Czech Republic, sits on a translucent resin base produced by Colea, but it's not attached to it. A recurring feature in Trampoukis and Petaloti's design work is that elements are often combined but not stuck together. Users can swap the parts around. 'Articulation is an important element of this collection,' adds Petaloti. 'The parts are gently touching and balanced, but one cannot exist without the other.'

The project with Colea is the first stage of what the architects hope will be a long-term collaboration. It's definitely one that further roots the practice's work in New York, while expanding its ongoing design exploration to new frontiers. ★

The Relativity of Colour collection is available from 19 October at Matter, 405 Broome Street, New York; objectsofcommoninterest.com; mattermatters.com

City, has been hand-producing Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building replicas in resin for the past 30 years. Colea and his small team create thousands of models a year, but also lend their services to artists and galleries, working with Paula Hayes, Michael Wilkinson and Mariko Mori among others.

'Ovidiu's studio is a magical place for us,' says Petaloti. With a background in art – she has worked at the Guggenheim Foundation and the Faou Foundation in New York, and as Mori's studio director – Petaloti was well aware of Colea's particular skills. 'He is very modest, the kindest person you can ever meet,' she enthuses. 'He can make souvenirs and a million-dollar sculpture in parallel. And he treats both projects with the same care and passion.'

While they were developing the collection, Petaloti and Trampoukis paid regular visits to the workshop, starting out experimenting with acrylics. 'The range is an exercise in levels of transparency and translucency, given by glass and acrylic,' explains Petaloti. 'How the two materials interact and how you get different results

