

District presents Giopato & Coombes at Denfair, Melbourne 2018

“Set your imagination alight - a multisensory celebration of contemporary design and artisanal craftsmanship”

This year at Denfair Melbourne '18, District presents unique lighting pieces direct from the recent Milan Design Week. Designer duo, Cristina Giopato & Christopher Coombes exemplify the District brand DNA. They've embraced their passion for product design by connecting advanced materials, such as aeronautical grade stainless steel and 3D printing with the ancient artisanal heritage of glass, brass and marble, to create true masterpieces. Refined, yet playful and intriguing. Their collaboration has created a unique series of hand-crafted individual pieces which maximise functionality with aesthetic motives in perfect balance.

Giopato & Coombes believe that true product design is defined by finding the synthesis between emotion, product conception and the pragmatism of innovation. .

The study of the behaviour of light - of the shapes enhancing its beauty and the technology that allows its existence- is the foundation of every product Giopato & Coombes design. Every collection is characterised by sophisticated grace, achieved by using unique materials and craftsmanship. The narrative behind the collections; the evolution in their design and the inspirations that created them are shared as follows:

FLAUTI

Handblown Murano glass LED lamps; the Flauti Collection combines tradition and technology in search of a new equilibrium between innovation and heritage.

“On the way to Murano by boat, docking at the Fondamenta dei Vetrai and beginning to wander from one alleyway to another; we were in search of the right “soffio” (inspiration) that would work for the project that we had in our minds. The colours of the houses and the sky on the first day of sunshine, after so much the rain and the warmth of the people reminded me of growing up and my memories of ancient and modern glass that have accompanied me since childhood,” says Cristina Giopato.

This Collection is made from Murano blown glass and turned brass, both high quality materials. Spontaneity and improvisation are integral elements of the design and are promoted as evidence of their hand-made originality. The traditional Muranese colours are inspired by the sunset of the Venetian lagoon and the Flauti lampshade is supported and illuminated by the custom-designed softspot bulb which, in contrast to the romantic design of the product, is a precise brass cylinder packed with the latest in LED technology.

The combination of tradition and technology found in the Flauti series searches for a new equilibrium which again represents Venice, a cornerstone of romance set in a world of technological advancement.

BOLLE

The Bolle collection is inspired by the lightness of soap bubbles, as a metaphor for the *hollowness* of light and is made from hand blown glass.

“For a few seconds, in front of us, we were surrounded by hundreds of soap bubbles. We wanted to crystallize this magical moment, when the bubbles grew until they touched each other, just before exploding! So this was the beginning,” continues designer Cristina Giopato.

Bolle is a suspension lamp in transparent glass, where the illuminating brass bulb is suspended between the spheres, giving light to not only the space surrounding it, but also the curved surfaces, multiplying reflections to amplify the magical effect.

The designer duo collaborated with the original master glassmakers who produced the Flauti series in Milano, to push the boundaries of light experimentation further. This time, they used a different technique, known as “a lume” in Italian, another artisanal craft developed in the Veneto region. This method, still hand-blown, has an even greater level of precision, allowing the possibility to assemble the spheres and making the “magic of the bubbles,” become a reality.

The Bolle lamp is available in two sizes, one with four and one with six spheres. The lamps can be combined to form endless compositions. In contrast to the intangible and magical appearance of the glass, the central brass body maintains a sense of functional rigor. The meticulous design development has simplified the body into a single cylinder, with internal components stacked and self-locking, without the need for screws. The double-sided LED bulb, designed and produced for this lamp exclusively, allows for downward and upward lighting. The rigorous design has maintained a formal minimalism with an intentional illumination, that emphasizes the characteristics of the glass.

The Bolle is also available in frosted glass, known as *Bolle Frosted*. The appearance is completely inverted, so rather than working with the hollowness of the clear glass; it magnifies the volumes and the single spheres create a gradient for the light, casting shadows according to their proximity to the light source.

SOFFIO

The Soffio collection evolved from the Bolle series, magnifying the sense of suspension of the transparent sphere on the brass source. The thin and transparent bubble now appears to float in mid-air and every element of the Soffio has been reduced to further enhance this perception. In the table and floor version, the marble base in Statuary or Marquina, acts as a weight and its solidity is contrasted to the lightness of the glass.

“This is the way we develop our series of products. We are constantly pushing the boundaries...guided by our intuition, we study what we can see and more importantly the invisible, to transform our vision into reality,” adds Christopher Coombes.

Soffio is characterized by the contrast between the sphere of glass and the solidity of the structure that supports it. This series is recognised for its simplicity and timeless elegance.

GIOIELLI

The Gioielli collection is composed of combinations of precious stones with a wall mounted disk made of solid brass, cast using a unique “lost wax technique,” with a raw metallic surface. Unique to this product series, an emerald green gem is positioned within the hand blown Murano glass, using a unique “battuto” finish and a spherical crystal lens is enclosed in a cylinder of shaped brass, creating a “partridge eye” effect which immediately catches the gaze of the observer.

“On a whim, I love to open my grandmother’s antique jewelry box. And immediately I’m mesmerized and taken by, back in time, dreaming about the dances and parties where they were worn: The color of gold, precious stones, memories of beautiful times. A jewel brings with it history, secrets and passions, elements of life projected into our light. The Gioielli dresses interiors, creating sculptured lights,” says Cristina Giopato.

Gioielli is the result of a perfect balance between metal structure (an iconic material for a light setting), and the coloured, precious gems inserted by hand into it. The materials - Murano glass, brass, enamelled glass and the spherical lens - each attract direct or indirect light source, independent of the others. It is these unique luminous beams, generated by the variety of materials and their applications, that create a perfect combination of geometric and expressive forms, fusing technology and aesthetics.

CIRQUE

Lamps with slender thread-like structures in brushed brass that change form to create infinite geometric compositions. The design of this series, inspired by circus equipment, uses capsules that project continuous light. Each capsule, made in ribbed glass with extremities in brass, is crafted using a lathe. A unique material (used in the automotive sector) makes it

possible to connect Led bulbs, positioned at each end of the capsule, conducting the light along the entire length invisibly. This technologically advanced inner structure allows the elements to appear as if they have been chained to create a game of infinite forms, where the start of one mingles with the end of another.

“Sometimes we feel like two jugglers shifting in the air, directed by passion. This is what inspired the cirque collection, our vision of jugglers in the circus and our desire to daydream. After a roll of drums, darkness falls and two small spots of light appear: it’s time for the acrobats. They start their vaulting, seamlessly embracing the wind, they hold on but they let themselves go, rings cross each other like magic, somersaults amongst the stars! Not being able to figure out where one body ended and where the other started, we were left breathless, to observe this magical flow. This we have translated into the Cirque collection. Passion and our ability to dream is what keeps us alive,” says Christopher Coombes in closing.

District is proud to represent designers’ Cristiana Giopato and Christopher Coombes collections’ exclusively in Australia. Don’t miss this sensory installation showcasing the emotions evoked through the effective experimentation of light.

For more information, interview access or high res imagery, please contact Louise Cashmore on louisec@district.com.au or call +61 451 828 106.