



GRANDMATERIA II

14 October – 7 December 2011

Fabien Cappello • Formafantasma • Simon Hasan • Stuart Haygarth

Nicolas Le Moigne • Nina Tolstrup

Bringing together some of Europe's most progressive designers, Grandmateria II is the next chapter in a story that began in 2007 with the gallery's first exhibition. The title alludes to the mythologies of the Philosopher's stone: a stone said to have alchemical powers to transmute lead into gold. By working with modest materials, using materials out of context, or by layering the materials with rich narrative each of the represented designers elevate the ordinary to extraordinary effect. Similar to its precursor, Grandmateria II highlights design's ongoing ability to transform preconceptions of the everyday.

The choice of materials – pallet wood, local brick, found pine, tail lights from industrial vehicles, boiled leather, Eternit, ceramics or mohair – draw obvious parallels with such iconic designs as Gerrit Rietveld's Crate chair (1934), or Pier Giacomo + Archille Castiglioni's Mezzadro stool made from a tractor seat (1957) and Enzo Mari's *Autoprogettazione* kit furniture (1974). Yet, like *Arte Povera* – a term coined in 1967 by the critic Germano Celant to describe a group of Italian artists who used the simplest means to create poetic statements based on the events of everyday life – the works also play a much larger role in questioning both traditional cultures (local and global), and the materialism of consumer economics.

Opening times: 11am – 6pm, Tuesday - Saturday

Fabien Cappello, Brick Glass (2010) + Christmas Tree Furniture (2010-2011)

Both projects underscore Cappello's interest in employing regionally sourced materials and manufacturing processes as forms of design cartography. Brick Glass, conceived during his residency at the Foundation Claudio Buziol, Venice (curated by Martino Gamper), was an investigation into the role of the vernacular in Venetian arts and crafts. While Cappello's Christmas Tree project regenerated January's abandoned Christmas trees into butter-smooth and handsome furniture pieces.

Each unique works

Formafantasma, Moulding Tradition (2009) and Colony (2011)

Simone Farresin and Andrea Trimarchi of Formafantasma seek to stimulate a critical design dialogue through the connections between craft, industry, object and end-user. One such dialogue, between the ceramic series *Moulding Tradition* and the textile series *Colony*, focuses on the pertinent geo-political issues of immigration, assimilation, colonisation and the historical cross-flow of cultural currents between North Africa and Italy.

Each piece an edition of 12

Simon Hasan, Geno Stool and Geno Chair (2011)

Through an ongoing exploration into the medieval technique of *Cuir Bouilli*, Hasan rejects the contemporary reverence for the staid and pliable qualities of leather in favor of a more brutal and atavistic approach to the material. By boiling the leather to make it irreversibly hard, the Geno series, like his earlier Bambi range of stools, displays a richness, heritage and texture borne from a compound of industrial and hand techniques.

Edition of 12

Stuart Haygarth, Tail Light (2007)

Haygarth's sculptural Tail Light chandelier is a reappraisal of an object that is seen everyday on roads across the globe, but rarely appreciated for the geometric patterns or the ambient light created. As Haygarth says, "my work revolves around everyday objects, collected in large quantities, categorised and presented so that they are given new meaning. It is about giving banal and overlooked objects new significance."

Edition of 7

Nicolas Le Moigne, Slip Lamp (2011)

Taking his starting point from the intrinsic properties of Eternit (a compound of cement and pulped fibrous material), Le Moigne challenges expectation, pushing both the capabilities of the material as well as our perceptions of how it should perform. The Slip Lamp, resulting from his research into new casting techniques and design typologies suited to the material, displays Le Moigne's sophisticated understanding of, and capacity for, complexity and contrast – seemingly soft, yet rigid; industrialised yet handmade; refined yet organic.

Edition of 12

Nina Tolstrup, Paletable (2010)

Commissioned in collaboration with Bloomberg's annual "Waste Not, Want It" exhibition of works made from the media giant's daily detritus, the Paletable series challenges perceptions of why used, but not useless, wood is regarded as waste. The table and chairs were made from over 400 discarded pallets, which were kiln dried and rigorously reconfigured into functioning furniture. The labour-intensive process questions preconceptions of cheap versus expensive materials, yet also draws on Tolstrup's ongoing fascination with kit furniture and open source design.

Unique piece