OUT OF THE ORDINARY
Studio Wieki Somers (Wieki Somers et Dylan Van Den Berg)
25 octobre 2017 – 11 février 2018

Dossier de presse
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Lausanne, septembre 2017

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Studio Wieki Somers (Wieki Somers et Dylan Van Den Berg)

CONFÉRENCE DE PRESSE: MARDI 24 OCTOBRE À 9H

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Merci de confirmer votre présence jusqu’au mardi 17 octobre.

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High Tea Pot, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Sommers)
Image © Studio Wieki Somers

Actif dans le domaine du mobilier et du design industriel, le Studio Wieki Somers propose une relecture singulièreme et éclairée, voire réenchantée, du monde et des traditions. Tout en démontrant une sensibilité particulière pour les matériaux, leur travail se distingue par son ingéniosité et sa fantaisie. Wieki Somers et Dylan van den Berg envisagent le design d’aujourd’hui non seulement comme un miroir de son époque mais aussi comme un terrain d’expériences. Leur design se construit ainsi en réaction aux influences contemporaines de cultures du passé aussi bien qu’à l’actualité et aux bouleversements propres à notre siècle. Par exemple, une tempête de verglas au Pays-Bas inspire une série de vase (Frozen in Time) et l’observation des changements climatiques suscitent une réflexion sur l’usage de l’eau dans la fabrication des objets en verre et des tentatives de les réduire au maximum (Still Waters). Ou encore, l’influence contemporaine de la culture samouraï japonaise inspire des luminaires qui font allusions à leurs drapeaux.

Leur travail invite à poser un regard nouveau sur des objets quotidiens, et à découvrir leurs qualités cachées. Il permet de questionner autant nos rituels quotidiens que les spécificités de nos environnements à travers des propositions sortant de l’ordinaire (out of the ordinary). Les matériaux sont également au centre de tout leur processus créatif: leurs propriétés tactiles et l’émotion qu’ils peuvent susciter sont minutieusement réfléchis par les créateurs, qui mêlent volontiers technologies contemporaines et techniques artisanales anciennes.

Le studio travaille pour différents éditeurs de design, musées et galeries, dont la prestigieuse galerie kreo de Paris. Il a été récompensé de nombreux prix, et compte des œuvres dans les collections de plusieurs musées internationaux dont le MoMA de New York, le Centre Pompidou de Paris, le Musée Boijmans Van Beuningen de Rotterdam et le Albert and Victoria Museum de Londres.

Bathboat, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Somers), 2005
Image © Studio Wieki Somers
TLmag: How do the Dutch landscape and environment affect your work? I’m thinking about your Frozen in Time collection (2010), which is literally inspired by a real-life environmental event, but I’m also thinking about your general working practice and process.

W.S.: Design is a mirror of the times. We are continuously fascinated by the hidden meanings behind everyday situations. Sometimes, we are struck by an actual environmental event like the ice storm that resulted in our Frozen in Time collection. On March 2, 1987, there was a downpour of freezing rain followed by a sudden bitter cold spell in the north of the Netherlands. It left a 2 cm thick layer of ice that covered the entire landscape. Life was literally brought to a standstill. Suddenly, everything was linked by a layer of ice. It froze time for a moment. In photographs, it looks as though the landscape were one giant still life. I was completely inspired by that magical moment. It motivated me to make a series of objects in which nature appears to have come to a standstill. We used UV-sensitive resin for the project. You can see this material as being like a durable form of ice. If you dip part of an object into the resin and then place it in the sun for a couple of minutes, it hardens and the individual elements ‘melt’ together into a product.

One of our more recent projects, Still Waters (2015), is also about the relationship between man and nature, as well as concerns about climate change. It is a collection of five glass vases, each of which represents a stage in the water cycle and/or is a reflection on this ambiguous relationship. We collaborated with three manufacturers and combined different glass techniques such as blowing, casting, sealing, grinding, fusing, sandblasting and slumping. The aim was to keep the water footprint as small as possible during the production process. As a designer, you have to adopt a conscious way of looking, thinking and working that strengthens the connection between people and products. We can’t save the world but we can draw people’s attention to values and things that they perhaps no longer see.

TLmag: Mitate, the series of lights that you presented at Galerie kreo in 2013, was partly inspired by the Japanese word mitate. The term refers to a specific way of perceiving objects whereby you imagine them as something else in order to instil new meaning and experiences in them. How did you go about developing a collection around this idea? Do you try to bring this idea of encouraging alternate readings of objects into your other projects as well?

W.S.: The Japanese word mitate means to look at an object in a different way than that which is intended. It means seeing an object as something else so that you experience it in a completely new way. The lamp collection Mitate is based on this concept, as is most of our work. Mitate allows users to discover various hidden layers of meaning and these combinations sometimes have surprising effects. There are some similarities with our own way of working. We try to uncover the hidden qualities of ordinary objects, thereby inviting people to see their everyday reality with fresh eyes. It is my belief that when products have different meanings and layers, multiple interpretations are possible. The products can then retain their ability to fascinate for a longer time.

The series was inspired by Samurai culture, whose ideas and aesthetics still have a great influence on Japanese culture. We visited Samurai houses in Japan and came across illustrations of 16th century Samurai flags at a museum. Their intriguing designs identified different clans and served as a means of communication. We decided to create a contemporary equivalent of these flags by translating them into light poles, in other words, a family of lamps. The collection consists of seven light poles, a reference to the seven principles of Samurai.

TLmag: In your work and your creative process, what is the function of technology such as innovative materials and fabrication techniques? How do you go about selecting the materials for a given project?

W.S.: Finding the right materials has always been an essential part of our research. A good idea is not interesting in and of itself. It is the physical material that determines whether or not the product is good. The material’s tactile qualities, personality and inherent characteristics contribute greatly to the message we want to convey. That is the case with the UV-sensitive resin we used in the Frozen in Time collection and the various materials we used in the Mitate collection. With Mitate, the high-tech and intricate craft techniques combined to alter the ways in which the lamps diffuse or reflect light. More recently, the 2016 Arita Tea Sets featured the iconic ‘Koransha blue’ glaze and patterns inspired by ancient decorative techniques that use metal stencils to spray motifs onto the surface. Our palette is diverse. We work with different materials depending on the project. Of course, the most important thing is for the materials and techniques we use to be durable.

Interview complète sur le site de TL Mag:
http://tlmagazine.com/studio-wieki-somers-translating-traditions/
Still Waters Narcissus, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Sommers)
Image © Labadie

Still Waters Water Levels, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Sommers)
Image © Studio Wieki Somers

Frozen in Time, Frozen Vase, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Sommers), 2010
Image © Fabrice Gousset
Mitate collection, Chuugi, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Somers), 2016
Image © Fabrice Gousset

Mitate collection, Rei, Studio Wieki Somers (Dylan van den Berg & Wieki Somers), 2016
Image © Fabrice Gousset
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| Ateliers | À la manière de Wieki Somers  
Atelier enfants 4-6 ans accompagnés d'un parent, mercredi 29 novembre de 14h à 15h  
Atelier enfants 7-12 ans, mercredi 18 janvier de 14h à 15h30  
15.- par participant  
Inscription obligatoire : inscription@mudac.ch ou 021 315 25 30 |
| Visites commentées | Mardi 14 novembre 2017 à 12h15  
Samedi 27 janvier 2018 à 16h |
| Horaires | Ma-di 11h-18h  
Ouvert les jours fériés, y.c. les lundis  
Entrée gratuite le premier samedi du mois |
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