

LUXE IMMO

LUXURY REAL ESTATE & CONTEMPORARY ART



LUXURY REAL ESTATE:

MONACO: CARRÉ D'OR, EDEN STAR, PORT DE FONTVIEILLE
 ROQUEBRUNE-CAP-MARTIN: CONTEMPORARY STYLE VILLA
 NICE MONT BORON: MAGNIFICENT BELLE ÉPOQUE VILLA
 CANNES CROISSETTE: SPLENDID PENTHOUSE
 NEAR THE BEACHES OF PAMPELONNE: LUXURY VILLA
 PARIS XVI: PRESTIGIOUS APARTMENT
 COURCHEVEL 1850: CHALET OF EXCEPTION

ARTS & DESIGN:

YINKA SHONIBARE AT THE NEW NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MONACO
 ODA JAUNE, RIDLEY HOWARD, PASCAL BAUER, HSINLI WANG...

EVENTS & REPORTS:

MARYAN GANDON CHEF AT THE FAIRMONT MONTE CARLO, MOUNA
 REBEIZ AT MONTBLANC, THE LATIN AMERICAN HOUSE IN MONACO...



RAW-EDGES DESIGN STUDIO



Yael Mer and Shay Alkalay, a couple of designers, work together since 2007 under the name of Raw-Edges Design Studio. Guided by the desire to create playful objects, funny and surprising, they try out various materials. Their complementarity allow them to create objects with innovative and friendly shapes, winning many prizes and are bought by big collections such as MOMA in New-York. Encounter around the presentation of their latest series of objects, « The Coiling Collection ».

They were both born in 1976, in Tel-Aviv. They live and work in London.

EXHIBITIONS

2010 *The Coiling Collection*, Fat Galerie, Paris, France

2009 *Dress Codes: Clothing as Metaphor*, Katonah Museum of Art, New York, USA

'Repeat Please', Stedelijk Museum, Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands

Representing UK Design, Palermo Design Week, Palermo, Italy

Punk Craft, Design Miami & Fendi, Milan, Italy
Fat Galerie, Paris, France

Yael Mer and Shay Alkalay, you work together under the name Raw-Edges and you are a couple in life as well. When did you met?

Shay Alkalay : We met in Jerusalem where we did a BA in Art and Design. Then we decided to go to London together to study at the Royal College of Art.

Yael Mer : Together but separately in a way.

S.A. : Yes, we have been a couple already and have just had a baby.

Congratulations!

S.A. : Thank you! So, we wanted to go and study at the Royal College of Art and luckily we got a place. Since then we live in London.

Y.M. : We ended up at the Royal College of Art in 2006 and after we did many experiments of staffs. Then, we went to China for a project with other designers in a big group. It was the first time that we officially worked together. Before we were very much involved in our own projects. Maybe we could give each other some advices but the separation was very clear. When we came back from China in 2007, we decided to create a studio together.

You may be very complementary. What are your own specialities?

S.A. : She deals more with soft materials and organic forms. She likes paper a lot.

Y.M. : I like two dimensional materials, twist it and transform into volumetric shapes.

S.A. : I am more an engineer, more mechanical and « solid ». I like wood and strong shapes. This is our own skills or interests but on top of this, we are both interested in the prospect of creating playful and surprising things.

Y.M. : I know his own abilities and he knows mine. If he has an idea and know that it is a thing that I could do, he asks me and we go to this direction or others ways around.

What are you inspired by?

Y.M. : It can be anything ! It can be material itself or just walking down in the street, see something and then... It doesn't deal with great philosophical inspirations or huge goals such as doing democratic design. It is very down to earth.

What is your definition of design ? Playful as you said?

Y.M. : Funny and playful is the result in a way.

S.A. : It is very important for us that our designs don't look serious or too important. We want to make something that is really fun, that people like to touch and move, on which they like to sit. Like something that is very engaging and not something that you consider like very big and frightening sculptures. We want to do something that is really funny.

And useful obviously.

S.A. : Yes it is very important as well. And we don't play with symbolism. We just work with the material. It is important that it makes sense. We do experiments. For instance, we have combined felt and silicone in « The Coiling Collection », our last pieces that we have very recently presented in collaboration with FAT Galerie in Paris. We thus wish to mix a very soft and very warm material with another one that is, as opposed, high tech and futuristic. Together it works well for us. This is an example of our experiments.

In this collection, as well as in all your designs, colour is very present.

Raw-Edges The Coiling Collection



The Coiling Collection - 2010
Courtesy Fat Galerie Paris

Hole in the floor - 2010





From top to bottom and from left to right :

Grove Console Table
(Console Bosquet) - 2009

Pivot - 2008
Arco, © Petrik Pantze

Pleated Pleat Stools - 2010

Stack - 2008
Shelf, Established & Sons

S.A. : Yes, we like colours a lot. All our works are involving colours because it is fun.

Y.M. : Sometimes I pick ideas for colours in a catalogue where one can choose many types and colours of felt. The combinations of colours they offer are often fascinating and amazing. This is one of our sources of inspiration for this new collection. Instead of deciding to make pieces that are only grey, we played with all the colours proposed.

S.A. : I would add that it is often difficult to know how the finished piece will look like. The result is not always the one you imagined in your mind. So at times, when you set up the piece, it doesn't work as you wanted. For instance, we have created an orange table with

a wood plank. A collector wanted this table to be topped with a glass. So we tried glasses of different sizes but the result was really bad.

Y.M. : In our work, we constantly try and then we judge. We have to experiment.

S.A. : This is what keeps the surprise because if you can imagine everything in your mind, it couldn't be surprising. You imagine something, you make it and if it looks boring or obvious, you have to change something. We want our objects to provoke reactions.

Your desire is to make surprising designs.

Y.M. : I doubt that it is always possible to make something surprising but we want to avoid the obvious and the familiar forms.

S.A. : In the case of "The Coiling Collection", when someone asks if he can sit on a piece, it is because it is not so obvious that you can sit on it. It is for us an example of what it is not so familiar. It is something new, different. We are happy that people ask this kind of question. For the moment, this collection is made of prototypes. Owing to the presentation in Fat Galerie, we now see what is the reaction of people, what we want to change already if we make more products. We are going to improve the technique. It will be a bit more "soft".

Do you work with engineers or just together?

S.A. : Yes, just together and we have a feedback from the gallery. At the beginning of the development of the Coiling designs, we tried with acrylic resin which is quite like fibreglass but not toxic. This material is very fragile and if you sit really brutally on it, it cracks. So we changed to silicone because it gives the same effects on the sides, defining the contours of the felt, but it is not fragile as it is very flexible.

Y.M. : It works well because the silicone goes into the felt, which was not the case with the first material we used. We really wanted to see the layers of the felt.

S.A. : It took us half a year to gather all these ideas. We did the first try for Ten Small Atlases, an exhibition in Milan, in April 2010. After three or four months we got the new idea after experiments, and now we are more satisfied with the silicone.

Y.M. : It was the first time we worked with silicone.

How many pieces have you produced for the "Coiling Collection"?

S.A. : Six models. This is the first step and it can go on for years. It reflects the fact that we don't want to deal with the static or the styling. We want to develop more this new process. Maybe we could make a big bed in some time. We don't know where our imagination can lead us. The collection has a really big future and we don't want to conclude it in half a year and move on.

Are these current six models unique pieces?

Y.M. : Few of the pieces are going to be limited editions and others won't. They are self-made prototypes so they are always numbered and signed. And their number could increase: the last exhibition in Fat Galerie was a big success and we made more pieces to satisfy the demand.

S.A. : Collectors are very happy to know that we make the pieces ourselves. It is very difficult to find someone able to do that because this technique doesn't exist. We get the felt, which comes into metres, and then we cut out many stripes that we roll around the structure. When the shape has been given, we apply the silicone, which solidifies the felt. In a stool, there are about two litres of silicone. It seems to be a lot but it goes inside the felt. Then it dries.

Y.M. : The process seems to be simple but in reality it is very complex!

S.A. : We experiment and then we see how it works.

How was this idea born for example?

S.A. : We don't know!

Y.M. : Sometimes, we just sit three hours in the studio and a new idea comes up.

S.A. : But we've had a passion for felt for years.

Y.M. : It was just the good opportunity for this exhibition to make pieces using felt. In the past, we tried to mix felt with epoxy, but it is a very "brutal" and fragile material as well as the acrylic resin. The felt has a very good quality, you can shape it.

Raw-Edges Studio has a great success. Some of your designs can be found within the permanent collection of the MOMA in New York (the shelves « Stack ») or in the Design Museum in London. You have also won many awards including the title of Designer of the Future in 2009 from Design Miami/Basel. What is your vision about that?

S.A. : To be awarded with the title of Designer of the Future is a big responsibility. It is a bit too important but such awards are part of the ambition of Design Miami: they want to do the best. It was really great to work with them, they gave us a lot of freedom.

Y.M. : But being the « best » or something like that doesn't interest us. We just want to be interesting in what we are doing. This is our motivation.

S.A. : Yes, we don't want to change the world or do any revolution. We just want to create things that people like and that we like to make.

Y.M. : Maybe it is very selfish in a way: to come in the studio and to like what we do.

Do you disagree sometimes?

S.A. : All the time!

Y.M. : We agree maybe ten percent of the times!

S.A. : It is once we have finished a piece that we agree. We always « fight » during the process.

I guess it is stimulating as well!

S.A. : A lot! Because when you work with another person, one could say that it is not good enough, that one could do better. This interaction is very important.

How do you consider the design today?

S.A. : I think that a part of it is very interesting and another is less, like anything else. There are a lot of proposals and opportunities and we don't like everything of course.

Y.M. : It is also nice to be inspired by things that aren't design, like films, travelling, seeing contemporary dancing or art exhibition.

■ Marie-Émilie Fourneaux