

ARTFLOW

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Enrico Zanolla

Enrico Zanolla studied architecture in one of the prestigious Universities in Europe (IUAV) in Venice and graduated in 2004.

Between 2004 and 2011 has co-owned DZstudio, design and interior studio, collaborating during the years with companies such as Calligaris, Venier, Miniforms, Fantoni, Gruppo Sintesi. After a 2 year experience in Moscow as furniture designer has started his own studio in fall 2011.

His works concerning architecture, contract, interior design, industrial design are strictly linked to the sensorial glorification and style. He shows his projects in the most important design exhibitions, cultivating originality in each project he adopts. He developed a particular attention to shapes, colours, textiles and trends of furniture, design and fashion.

His objective is to tackle projects not only in terms of the aesthetic aspects traditionally associated with design, but by developing the entire creative process, including project conception, technical development, engineering and design. He engages in design and consultation for clients around the world, from large-scale projects and global brands to smaller start-ups to private residencies and commercial projects.

His works have been featured on BoBedre, Interior+Design, Audi Magazine, Touch Decor, RUM, Fesco Life, Elle Decor, Icon, Interni, Azure, Made, Dwell, Complot, Repubblica, Diseno Interior, Gioia Casa and many more.



Can we meet you please? Who is Enrico Zanolla?

I am a 24/7 designer, living in northeast of Italy, very close to the border of Slovenia. Kind of a tech addicted, I love reading (labels, instructions, magazines, books, everything has words in), travelling (perhaps by car), watching movies (from blockbuster ones to far east productions), drawing, art in all its forms and photography. I am a proud eager beaver, so let's go with the second question.

How was your background growing up?

It was surely nice, growing up in the 80's in a little town with many green areas and fields nearby my house let me enjoying all my free time with friends, playing in full freedom and with our minds imaging adventures and parallel worlds. I am quite sure children nowadays can't live the same way we lived, in contact with nature, and sometimes I miss how my eyes were able to see the real world from a different point of view.

What was your ambition, while growing up as a Child?

This is funny: my greater ambition was to become a mason because I was so in love with lego and I'd have liked to build something only with them! Then after Jurassic Park movie I changed idea and I so wanted to be archaeologist. Even this dream was going to end, during high school my intense feeling for drawing showed up more and more up to the decision of attending the University of Architecture.

Why did you choose to attend college?

My father was a technician in Fincantieri, one of the most important boatyard of the world, so he was used to bring some works home and I was fascinated by those technical drawings. During my childhood I spent so many hours hand drawing and imitating Mickey Mouse comics, and had the chance to travel all the Europe with my parents paying attention to much different architecture. So I think all of this combined with the interest for the art classes led me to Architecture University.

How much influence has your Architecture training had on your product designs?

Architecture gives you the ability to face small or big projects, concentrating on the whole of it or just on the details at the same time. It's a method, viewing a problem from different angles, crushing the usual patterns and going further in the design stage. Moreover history of architecture linked to history, psychology, art and literature, gives a solid background for understanding cultural processing and social dynamics.

Is there anything about your designs that you believe to be unique or unusual?

I try to design what I like in terms of beauty; I don't look for the latest trend even if I could. I simply design, people will decide if my products are unique or not.

Why have you decided to pay particular attention to shapes, colours, textiles?

Because they can satisfy our senses: Shapes can be matched to our beauty request and taste; colours are able to change our mood, can work for helping our everyday life and make us feeling better or not;

textiles is connected to touch, and tactile products are definitely what I am trying to develop, something you can feel with your eyes but even with your hands.

Form or Function. Which will you go for?

Tricky question. Both of them of course, there can't be form without function (it would be simply contemporary art) as there can't be only function without any beauty. Human nature strives for beauty.

What was the idea behind the Plera?

Plera means funnel in Friulan, the language spoken in northeastern Italy. The idea was to realize a small suspension lamp which could express minimalism but with the soft touch of the wood in opposition to the cold touch of porcelain. The inversion of a simple shape like that one of a funnel creates a really simple lamp, where the wood gives the last friendly touch in contrast to the elegant and classic appearance of the porcelain.

Plera





The Clamp took the form of a Chesterfield sofa, how far has it gone? Tell us more about it.

The inspiration for this suspension lamp comes from the pattern of Chesterfield sofa, applied then on the exterior surface of the lamp. In Russia, Capitoné pattern is very popular, commonly used for interiors or luxury projects, so I was dealing almost every day with it. Then I thought: why not placing it on a suspension lamp to match the entire interior and that's how it started. The contrast between the smooth interior, the sophisticated and deep buttoned exterior is ideal for a modern interior space with a touch of glamour and classic style.

Clamp is made of two aluminium hemispheres (so 100% recyclable) and natural leather (not artificial one that is made of plastic, so will not decompose as quickly in the environment). Halogen bulb is used for energy saving and for its efficiency and hours life. Sales are going quite good, price is not so low but can't be different: I could drop it producing it in China, but I want a 100% original Italian product for keeping quality at its best.

The Basil Triptych won a Design and Design International award. What was the inspiration behind it?

This project is a tribute to the beauty and uniqueness of the St. Basil cathedral in Moscow. I moved in Moscow in fall 2009 and during my stay there I spent so much time observing and studying the constructive system of the domes. I was totally fascinated by it.

The difference in colour and size comes from symbolic meanings assigned to every single dome. A great attention has been paid to details and quality of realized domes, and everything was made without using a 3d cad. So these charming domes became a challenge and a strong idea to convert them in lamps, mainly because they were designed like candle flames symbolizing that every man is "the light of the world".

The final suspension lamps are characterized by dynamic shapes, reflecting the movement of a candle and at the same time containing the modular constructive system used in the original domes.

And I give you a leak: two of them will be available for purchasing at the beginning of 2012.



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Would we be wrong if we conclude that you are very much interested in lighting design?

No, it's a field on which I am concentrating very much in the last 2-3 years. I can't find more ways to experiment my vision of highly tactile products, that's why in the last months I am working on ceramic and wood, both of them are "living materials" and I think really suitable for the interaction with the light.

How do you work with photographer and other designers for your website?

I must be frank: I like to learn new things, so behind my website there is just me, I designed it. About photographs, Clamp pictures were made by me, all the other ones come from companies photo session so I didn't have the chance to decide anything about that.

Tell us about your commercial experiences, How about your clients?

Clients are always different, some of them presents a brief other ones leaves freedom for the designer of exploring all the ways. What they have in common is to watch out for the final price, no one buy something that is out of market range, not if you want to make numbers. But usually they are eager for new materials and new manufacturing process, because they know that this is the only way to be always at the top.

A stylish, modern coffee table in wood and chromed steel. How would you describe Baloo?

Baloo is one of my very first products, and it's embarrassing for me speaking about it because I don't recognize anymore myself into it. My approach to design has changed, it's a very first period product, really simple and visual, not focused on tactile experience or functional, just shape. I described it like a useful early step of maturation.

How has the media helped in creating awareness for your work?

Media is truly important; there is a saying for architects: "if you are not featured on magazines, you don't exist." That's true and sadly real, that's why connections with magazines, blogs and editors is a win.

The publication on blogs is the first step, and then comes magazines and request by people for buying a specific product even if it is still a concept. Online media are the key of success. The media awareness can make a product a winner or a loser, it's a hard to accept but PR is 50-60 percent of our work.

Is there anything we should be keeping an eye on for the future?

About my work, Plera and Basil Triptych, both of them are already shocking for their beauty at the prototype stage, believe me. I got a couple of new personal projects I am preparing for the new year, one of them will be a complete new collection produced by me and probably 2-3 other designers. About the design world, keep an eye on the East Europe scene, is growing up very fast.

Do you have any hobby? What do you do in your spare time?

Mostly making photos and reading, hanging out with some friends for a couple of drinks or a good movie, and sleeping. Yes, I am a bit lazy sometimes and in winter I like to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the sea not far from where I live.

Anything else you want to share?

Yes, it's 3 a.m., still can't sleep but I would like to thank you for this interview. I want to invite readers to visit my webpage and I promise to dazzle you with new products during the 2012. If somebody is heading for northeast Italy and want to have a coffee, just drop me a line! Thanks, and long live to design.



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