



Pressrelease, 21st April 2015

designreport award 2015

Character counts!

Hand-crafted iron furniture and sheet metal lamps triumph over technically brilliant but trivial products from the 3D printer: the designreport award and prize money of 7,500 euros go to Vittorio Venezia from Palermo.

Milan, 16th April 2015. »The true art lies in turning good designs into objects with character,« said jury spokeswoman Dr. Jana Scholze. »That's why, in no small part, the award is also an expression of our admiration for the craftsmen that Vittorio Venezia collaborated with in order to turn his designs into reality.« Juror Michael Anastassiades also saw the decision in the Italian's favour as a vote for »the beauty of craftsmanship«. Besides Vittorio Venezia, the international jury of experts also honoured nbt.Studio from Taiwan and German designers Meike Harde and David Lehmann with Special Mentions. For the 16th time since the award was launched, the design talents of the year were chosen at the Milan Furniture Fair, the world's most important design event. As in previous years, the jury selected the winners from amongst the approx. 200 participants at the Salone del Mobile's newcomer forum Salone Satellite.

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The winner: Vittorio Venezia

Born in Palermo in 1980, Vittorio Venezia studied architecture in his home town. In 2007 he moved to Milan where, besides working in the studio of Alessandro Mendini, he also collaborated with designers like Denis Santachiara and Giulio Iacchetti. Venezia, whose clients include firms such as Alcantara, Falper and Meritalia, has won a number of awards for his designs. He often feels drawn to return to his native city – and even dedicated the 4decimi and Ferro collections he was showing in Milan to Via Calderai, a Palermo lane famed for its craftsmen's workshops. 4decimi (four tenths) is a series of twelve pendant lamps that owes its name to the 0.4-millimetre thick sheet steel that the shades are made of. They are reminiscent of ready-mades and intended as a homage to everyday Sicilian objects such as oil canisters, funnels or sieves. »Every single piece,« says the designer, »was cut, bent and welded by hand by 86-year-old tinsmith Nino Ciminna at what is probably the oldest workshop on Via Calderai.« The traditional iron grilles that inspired Vittorio Venezia's Ferro collection are made on the same street. The product family consists of five different chairs, a table, six flower stands and a doorstop. The components of the individual pieces were CNC cut out of iron slabs and welded together by a young blacksmith from Via Calderai.
www.vittoriovenezia.com

The Special Mentions

As demonstrated by many examples from previous years, the designreport award Special Mention can be a real career booster for talented young designers: so as to give the runners-up a helping hand on the road to success, designreport provides support in the form of professional PR.

Meike Harde

27-year-old Meike Harde has already made a name for herself with original designs such as a series of seating furniture called Zieharsofika. After studying product design at the HBK Saar, she did an internship with Benjamin Hubert in London in 2012 and founded her own firm in Saarbrücken in 2013. In her designs, she looks for unusual constructional solutions whilst never losing sight of the conceptual, symbolic aspects of her creations. »My work represents a kind of feminine style that deliberately sets itself apart from established forms,« she says. In Milan, Meike Harde was showing the results of Wooden Aquarell – a study she conducted into colouring wood. She discovered that the addition of liquid pigments creates subtly nuanced areas of colour on the material's surface. The pigmented wood is finished with a coat of varnish and can then be processed for a wide variety of uses.
www.meikeharde.com

NEW

David Lehmann

Born in Wuppertal in 1985, David Lehmann studied industrial design at Stuttgart's Academy of Art and Design. As an assistant to sculptor Tony Cragg, he also gained experience in the world of art. In 2013, he founded his own design studio in Munich, where he has been living ever since. In Milan, David Lehmann was presenting designs made of wood, glass, porcelain and nano liquid. The latter can be used to make bubbles that look and float just like soap bubbles but don't burst quite as quickly. Lehmann used them to form the Ephemere bowl, which can withstand being looked at but vanishes under even the slightest load. In a way, you could say the porcelain collection Vers a Tile is the exact opposite of this conceptual one-off. Produced by an artisanal manufacturer in Saxony, the plates, cups and bowls convinced the jury with their clear design language and excellent manufacturing quality – not to mention their multifunctionality. The eggcup, for instance, doubles as an espresso cup, and the plates can be used as lids for the bowls.

www.studiodavidlehmann.com

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nbt.Studio

»Appreciate culture, respect the environment, embrace technology« – that was the motto of Taipei-based nbt.Studio's presentation, which consisted of various pieces of lacquered occasional furniture, stools, table lamps and an interactive wall light by the name of Nebbia. The latter was an impressive demonstration of how hitherto neglected waste products can be recycled – or, to be more precise, upcycled. The designer created the shade of his backlit Nebbia luminaire out of filter films from discarded LCD displays. The irregular folded pattern on the top layer of film creates the impression of a glowing crystal. Designer Henry K.T. Hsiao, who was born in 1980 and shares his time between Canada and Taiwan, founded nbt.Studio in 2011. The initiative sees itself as a network of experts from a wide range of different fields who are committed to the development of sustainable products and solutions.

www.nbtstudio.com

The jury

Recognise quality, discover potential, appreciate differences – that's the job that faces the jurors of the designreport award at Salone Satellite. This time round, experts from Germany, England, Italy and China were entrusted with this challenging responsibility: the panel consisted of Cypriot-born and London-based designer **Michael Anastassiades**, Chinese designer **Rossana Hu**, Italian designer **Roberto Paoli** and curator **Dr. Jana Scholze**, who lives and works in London. The jury was chaired by editor-in-chief of designreport **Lars Quadejacob**.

The sponsors

The designreport award would not be possible without the help of companies and institutions who care deeply about promoting up-and-coming designers. We would therefore like to thank our sponsors **Luminaire**, **Nils Holger Moormann**, **Reisenthel Accessoires**, **Richard Lampert** and **Vitra**, as well as the **German Design Council**, for their generous financial support.

www.designreport.de/award/results

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