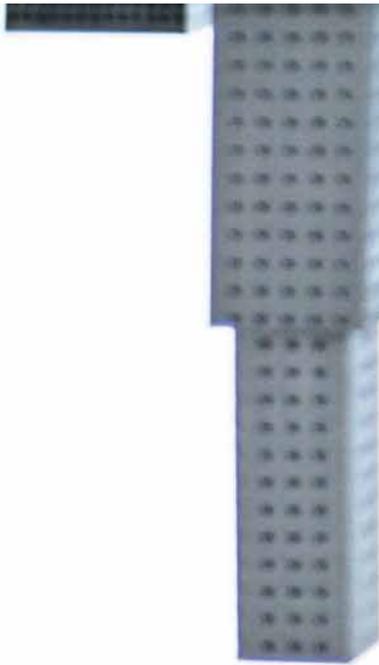


THE MAKING OF A METROPOLIS

An exhibition
coming to Dubai will
showcase work by
three designers – all
inspired by city living



For as long as people have lived in cities, the built environment has inspired artists' work. An exhibition coming to Dubai next month was conceived to offer a fresh perspective on the steel and concrete conurbations we call home.

Three furniture designers from different personal and professional backgrounds were tasked with creating collections inspired by urban living for exhibition The City on Display.

Newcomers Stelios Mousarris and Tarek Elkassouf will join veteran product designer Nada Debs at Design Days Dubai, a four-day celebration of high-end furniture, collectibles and objets d'art, to unveil their latest work. They were commissioned to create the pieces by Cities Boutique, a design-led homeware store with branches in Riyadh and Dubai.

Mousarris was born in Cyprus in 1988 and earned a degree in modelmaking at England's Arts University of Bournemouth. After graduating, he returned to his home city of Larnaca and focused on small interior design pieces. His work soon drew the attention of British product designer Christopher Duffy, who hired him for his firm, Duffy London. Mousarris has recently relaunched his own eponymous brand, to which he has brought the wealth of experience he gained while in the UK.

At Design Days Dubai, he will display his table Wave City, a dramatic piece in which a single sheet of metal is bent into the shape of a letter 'U' turned on its side. It's made of steel covered in two layers of maple wood, and a plastic silhouette of a cityscape curls around its underside.

Created using 3D printing technology, the intricate form is juxtaposed with the sleek tabletop above.

"Two thin layers of maple were bent over a steel frame, obscuring the metal so the table looked as though it was made of solid wood. The cityscape is made of polylactic acid (PLA), a biodegradable plastic derived from renewable resources," Mousarris said.

"Each table is same but different. The wood is always a different shade – we use custom paint for each table and once it's the right colour we apply it to the buildings by brush.

"We paint a wood-grain effect onto the plastic with very fine brushes – and a lot of patience!"

Mousarris will present two tables at the event, one maple and one in matte black made only of steel and plastic. Just 25 pieces will be sold worldwide, each of which will be numbered.

He adds: "We use the same buildings each time but every table has a different layout – it's an imaginary city." ▶



INTERACTIVITY

“All design, whether of a city or house or lamp, has to be human-centric. If it’s used by a person, it needs to create a sensation and to seduce the senses.”

So says Tarek Elkassouf, an architect, town planner and, latterly, product designer. In 2014 the Lebanese national launched a line of furniture called The Edge, for which he won a silver A’ Design Award in 2015.

Describing his work as “functional-sculptural”, Elkassouf makes futuristic pieces with an industrial feel. Light Structures, his collection for The City on Display, comprises lamps named Intersect, Lean and Fractures.

Elkassouf said: “I tried to fuse craftsmanship with technology by putting engineers and artisans under the same roof to produce pieces that connect to the time and

space, to the here and now. The piece I’ve called Fractures is human-scale – it goes up to 2m high. It’s a set of two lamps, the taller of which dominates the second.”

Lean is a table lamp, so called because it tilts to one side, while a small floor lamp, Intersect, “stands on the margins, creating a dialogue between lines, planes and volume.”

Elkassouf has used several kinds of metal, including stainless steel and brass in both brushed and shiny finishes. Each is touch-sensitive and can be illuminated by tapping; holding one’s hand on the stand causes the bulb to progressively dim.

“You can decide how long to touch it for according to how dim you’d like it to be,” he adds. “My work is interactive, so I look forward to seeing how the crowd at Design Days Dubai will respond to it.” ■

