



PRESS RELEASE

DESIGN APPARAT, neosots in free style

To work on an embryonic personality in order to reinforce its charm and usability: Design Apparat has been inspired by the patrimony of the late 20th century **Bulgarian material culture** to give life to its first collection of furniture.

Among the possible stimuli, the **Soviet legacy** certainly represents a radical source of inspiration, originating from the inevitable comparison with the architectural and design heritage that still identifies the Bulgarian territory. This aesthetics, whose martial severity continues to wield a subtle charm, even in virtue of its evident decline, takes shape in the elaboration of new unavoidable stylistic traits. These include the orthogonal recurrences of the most widespread **rationalism**, the commemorative shifts of **Soviet Baroque**, through to the graphic or sculptural productions fluctuating between **Figurative Realism** and **Constructivist Linearity**.

For almost fifty years, these shapes and suggestions have given life to a **homogeneous class of objects**, characterised by the ambition of making themselves indispensable to the widest audience, corresponding to almost the entire Bulgarian population. Designed and produced in a regime where resources were scarce, their look has strongly marked the reference material universe, for the most part organised around a rough use of concrete, wood and metal.

Nowadays, this collective material legacy and common stylistic experience, still not completely outclassed by Western objects, is still found in numerous artefacts used today, from old university and ministerial furnishings, to many pieces of furniture and ornaments in private homes, to murals still not destroyed by the renovations underway, through to a fleet of cars still made up of old Trabants and Volgas.

This aesthetic, although marked by an ideology that cannot be shared because it symbolises democratic repression, can take on relevance – especially during a situation of worldwide crisis and instability – under the profile of **formal rigour** and lengthening of the product's life cycle. This quality is capable of affirming itself in ethical terms, becoming at the same time fashionable and stylish due to a severity that transforms into composed sensuality, drier and more controlled, but nevertheless, not less appealing or attractive.

The urban and industrial characterisation which is typical of the Soviet is combined with the fascination for **Balkan rural culture**, which in Bulgaria takes on specific identifying traits relating to some historical qualities that are not found in any other country of the area.

The legacy of the **orphic culture**, whose epicentre can be found amid the mountains of Bulgaria, where according to legend, Orpheus's house was sheltered between the peaks of the Rodopi, tells us of a bond still rooted in the territory and nature, which is passed down through legends, folklore and folk songs. This bond takes on mystic overtones in the curative practices that are still carried out today using plants and local stones.

The **handcrafted folk heritage** influenced by the long Ottoman domination materialises in the traditional **Tcherga** wool carpets and also in the colour choices which are inspired by the multicoloured variety of reds, greens and oranges of the Bulgarian folk costumes, still used today in some remote areas of the country.

Design Apparat previews its collection from 22 to 27 April in the "Discovering Other Worlds, Other Ideas" Section of the "Temporary Museum for New Design 2009" as part of the Milan FuoriSalone, the "Supersudio Più".