

“Design Georgia” is showcased at PASSAGEN 2019

This year, the international focus of the PASSAGEN Interior Design Week Cologne is on Georgia. For the first time, Georgian interior design products will be presented to the world industry gathering in Germany. Under the brand of “Design Georgia”, four up-and-coming design studios will also represent the Georgian furniture industry and producers at the event.

An architect and interior designer Anuka Tavartkiladze, three architects and designers from Designbureau Nia Mgaloblishvili, Sophio Shevardnadze and Ia Liparteliani, the ecology-oriented family business Funduki and XYZ Integrated Architecture will all present their unique products. From design to manufacturing, all products are made in Georgia, showcasing the ability of local industry to combine design and production techniques, ability to work with materials such as metal, wood, glass, ceramics, etc. with a touch of innovation.

Participation of Georgian designers in PASSAGEN is supported by the EU and German Development Cooperation via GIZ and is organized in cooperation with Enterprise Georgia, the agency that operates under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and is committed to strengthening development of priority sectors, furniture manufacturing industry and design included, to enhance the country's export potential.

All four design studios are members of the Georgian Furniture Cluster, which was established in 2017 with the EU-GIZ support and unites 40 Georgian designers and furniture producers. The cluster was established with the purpose of helping individual entrepreneurs and companies overcome challenges through joining their efforts and resources, to bring furniture and interior designs from Georgia to Europe and beyond.

Each of the products showcased under “Design Georgia” brand in PASSAGEN possesses its own character.

Anuka Tavartkiladze is experimenting with different materials like ceramic, wood, metal, as well as forms and space. At the same time, she challenges herself to design and construct a form that reflects functional, social, environmental and aesthetic considerations.

“Georgia has always been the place for diffusion of different cultures and its Capital City of Tbilisi, the place where I grew up and where I live today, is the perfect example of this diffusion. Since I have started learning architecture, the diversity of Tbilisi in this regard has been a constant influence and inspiration for me - late 19th century Georgian architecture and early 20th century's art nouveau, soviet period brutalist architecture - it all seems like a total chaos, but still you can see the beauty in it,” says Anuka Tavartkiladze. Her work mainly focuses on combining different materials, forms and ideas, which at first glance might not seem connected. Iron and plants, wood and

ceramics, glass and steel square. “Using these materials gives me the opportunity to study them and see how far I can go in experimenting with them. How big are the possibilities of what I can do with them, how diverse are the capabilities of my own imagination and what can be the result of this relationship between the material and myself.”

Three young, and already successful, designers of Designbureau present their innovative, functional and, at the same time, versatile ideas. Nia Mgaloblishvili, Sophio Shevardnadze and Ia Liparteliani were born in Tbilisi where they now live and work. The main principle of their ‘modus operandi’ is to use minimal complexity and explicit language to create intelligent designs with a touch of irony. Their collections consist of products with their own histories that require the consumer to make sense of their messages, that sometimes may seem nonsensical, yet have their own logic. As one example, the “flying chair” has wings. “Everyone needs wings, even chairs,” designers argue. “Our “fountain” of light is inspired by traditional Georgian techniques of working with ceramics. Different shapes of ceramics on a metal structure in a floor lamp, where light pours from above into the eternity.”

The vision of the product design of the family driven Funduki is portable, lightweight and ecofriendly furniture and accessories. “We create designs and, at the same time, produce furniture that is easy to assemble and accessible for transportation,” says Sandro Tsivtsivadze. Funduki is a furniture brand with a sense of modernity without any of its unnecessary and tiring attributes - you don’t need what you don’t need! This also helps translate their approach to be extremely eco-friendly as it minimizes the utilization of materials and resources. This approach is strengthened by their versatility in utilization of different fabrics and textures, accessories and story boards for any item they envision. The furniture that they design is, on one hand, stylish in appearance and, on the other hand – easy to assemble.

Levan Lominashvili from XYZ Integrated Architecture creates an uncommon combination of mystical forms in objects for the living space. In 2015 his products “60 Series” won the German Design Award in a “Special mention” category and in 2018 he was a Silver A’ Design Award Winner for Eclipse Eyeglasses.

“Georgia’s design industry is growing and building up its presence on the interior design market. Participation of Georgian designers in the Passagen Interior Design Week provides for important marketing and business networking opportunities. Despite the lack of commercial base in Georgia, we are very motivated to create and design. We love what we do and this is why I think Georgian designers deserve a chance to have greater opportunities,” – says Levan Lominashvili.

Participation of Georgian designers in Passagen 2019 under the “Design Georgia” brand provides a unique opportunity to promote Georgia’s vibrant creative potential and brings the country into the limelight of international interior design and furniture industry, whose representatives will gather in Cologne in January 2019.