



7 February - 5 April 2025

Thinking with one's hands and making with one's head. Perhaps this is the best way to describe Marco Campardo's attitude to design. Focused on questioning established modes of production, his practice is rooted in material exploration and hands-on making, using unorthodox methods and tools to develop objects that are intriguing, both conceptually and formally.

For *Jello*, his first collaboration with Galerie kreO, Marco Campardo brings this approach to the fore by seeking to re-consider the relationship between the mould and outcome, between process and object. If the standard approach suggests that the designer drafts an ideal form to be reproduced endlessly through the precision of a mould, the work of Marco Campardo is based on the principle that forms are not the result of drawing forms on paper, but of a hands-on process of making. Indeed, rarely does Campardo design something from scratch. Often, what attracts him is the choice of a material or finding an intuitive solution to problems and limitations inherent in certain projects. His childhood spent with his father in a woodworking shop has influenced his approach to the world, starting from a technical understanding of objects, how they are made and how they are to be used. The *Jello* collection, on show at Galerie kreO in Paris from February 7 until April 5, as much as his previous work such as *Sugar Shapes*, *George* or *Elle* chair, are the result of this attitude whereby design is understood as a speculative medium, rooted in experimenting with materials and production processes.

When I first met Marco fifteen years ago, his relationship with the language of design was exquisitely two-dimensional, as he was a graphic designer. A graphic designer with a Helvetica attitude imbued with a Mediterranean spirit, so solid in his conviction about design, that I could hardly have imagined him outside of that frame. And yet, when I invited him in 2019 to work on the visual identity of MACRO, the museum of contemporary art in Rome that I directed, it was based on the knowledge that he could step outside of the two-dimensional frame, working with three-dimensional form and space, designing seating systems and exhibition displays. It was surprising to witness closely the transformation of Marco Campardo from a designer of signs to a designer of objects. During a workshop held at MACRO to produce stools - without a meaningful budget or professional tools - Marco

devised a process that allowed him to create objects in a serial manner, but still unique, using a cardboard mould instead of silicone.

This is the origin story of *Jello* shown today.

A project and an idea, born to overcome the limitations—of time, space, materials, technologies—that has paradoxically transformed into a kind of personal manifesto. The use of a humble material, the cardboard, in the earliest iterations of this series was a statement against the conventionality of design, embracing simplicity and imperfection. From simple stools designed for MACRO, the project has grown over the last few years to include a wide-ranging constellation of large-scale objects presented for the first time at Galerie kreO: a dining table, a square coffee table, a console, a bench, a mirror/chair. While the techniques have evolved to become more sophisticated and precise, they preserve the traces and essence of the original approach. These are evident in the objects themselves: their distinctive wavy patterns reflect the unique interplay of material and process.

With *Jello*, Campardo does not design the forms of individual objects; instead, he intervenes directly on the negative. He is an analogue designer who rejects any intervention post-production, trusting in the process itself. The aesthetics of the object shown at Galerie kreO, are therefore, determined by the process that shaped them, and paired with unique colour constellations. If I had to imagine Marco Campardo within a design nativity scene, he would be a figurine close to that group of figures who view design not as style, but as language. “Styles come and go. Good design is a language, not a style,” said Massimo Vignelli. While the generation of Enzo Mari, Bruno Munari, and Ettore Sottsass promoted an idea of breaking formats and experimenting across many disciplines, Campardo's approach, on the other hand, has focused on a single field, almost as an ideological choice.

Today, in both the art and design worlds, we are witnessing a total fluidity and openness to any form of slippage and blending between languages. In this sense, Marco Campardo lives a timeless contemporaneity, carrying forward a research that is both deeply methodical and conceptual. His only concessions are colors and titles.

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