CIRCOLO

Don't Get Too Comfortable

Curated by **Nicole Saikalis Bay**

From April 16th 2024

Don't Get Too Comfortable is an exhibition that explores desconstuctivist approaches in Contemporary Art and Collectible Design, curated by architect **Nicole Saikalis Bay.**

This capsule exhibition, hosted by **Circolo** during the *Design Week*, delves into the innovative realms where contemporary art meets collectible design, in dialogue with the pioneering works of artists Mandy El-Sayegh and Tracey Emin, alongside groundbreaking collectible design pieces by four established Italian designers, **CARA \ DAVIDE** (Cara Judd and Davide Gramatica), **Duccio Maria Gambi**, **Marco Guazzini** and **TIPSTUDIO** (Imma Matera and Tommaso Lucarini). These designers collectively challenge and redefine comfort and conventional design aesthetics, urging a reevaluation of personal and cultural narratives through their provocative works.

Mandy El-Sayegh's art, characterized by intricate collages and multimedia installations, navigates the complexities of language, identity, and memory, deconstructing traditional representations to explore the fluidity of meaning. **Tracey Emin**, through her raw, emotion-laden works, pierces comfort zones, inviting an engagement with vulnerability and resilience, fostering introspection and empathy among viewers. El-Sayegh and Emin articulate their intent to disrupt and challenge, aiming to provoke thought, spark conversations, and foster emotional connections.

The collectible design pieces on show disrupt conventional notions of functionality and aesthetics by deconstructing and reassembling familiar forms and materials. This approach not only challenges the traditional meaning of comfort in design but also provokes a reevaluation of the relationship between everyday objects and their users, through innovative material, texture, and shapes.

The design studio **CARA \ DAVIDE**, founded by **Cara Judd** e **Davide Gramatica,** thrives on a multidisciplinary approach, deeply rooted in continuous research of materials, territories, and the processes of perception-making. Their work, characterized by simplicity and natural color palettes, is brought to life through close collaboration with artisans from both countries, producing unique design editions that reflect a thoughtful dialogue between design and craftsmanship. Central to their philosophy is an embrace of imperfection as an essential element of intriguing design.
Using the mosaic technique for the ***Tessere*** serie they established a particular visual rhythm to the surface. At the edges of the object, they used the same ancient technique of Byzantine mosaic, with the dark border highlighting the boundary, to emphasize the interaction, or separation, between subject and context by playing with light, further enhancing not only the spatial boundaries but especially the conceptual ones.

Duccio Maria Gambi transforms marble offcuts by intricately engraving and coloring their surfaces, emphasizing their precise cut edges to enhance the contrast against their natural, rugged forms. This process metaphorically sends the marble into a "time vortex," where each piece suggests a fragment of a larger, undefined ancient structure, blurring the lines between contemporary art and historical ruins. Through this artistic endeavor, Gambi not only celebrates the inherent beauty of marble but also reflects on the cyclical relationship between human culture and nature, suggesting a fusion of the crafted and the organic, and evoking the legacy of an unnamed civilization.

For the ***INCAL*** serie Duccio Maria Gambi chose to work specifically on the cut surface of the marble. He engraved lines and textures into the newly created artificial and flat area, coloring parts of it to elevate and reinforce the rational and determined aspect of the work. He emphasizes the contrast between the original raw and rocky part of the stone that becomes a border to the newly introduced graphic surface.

Italian designer **Marco Guazzini** is celebrated for his innovative and elegant design approach, merging modern creativity with historical influences. Guazzini's crowning achievement is the invention of Marwoolus®,

a unique material that combines Prato wool and Pietrasanta marble, reflecting his Italian heritage and his dedication to creative expression. This groundbreaking material is recognized for its contribution to contemporary design and has been included in the Vitra Design Museum's permanent collection since 2016, serving as a testament to Guazzini's impact on the design world.

The ***Alurgite*** coffee table – that was purposely produced for this exhibition at Circolo – marks the beginning of a series of works inspired by a personal exploration of minerals. Through the observation of images obtained from the electron microscope, he embarked on a journey to capture the primordial essence of matter, immersing himself in the complexity of mineral structures and seeking to enhance their intrinsic beauty. Each piece is a unique work of art that blends science and art, nature and human creativity.

TIPSTUDIO, founded by **Imma Matera** and **Tommaso Lucarini**, operates at the intersection of design and art, drawing deep inspiration from the essence of territories, anthropology, and conceptual analysis. Their approach to design is distinguished by a commitment to material research and narrative processes, aiming to push the boundaries of contemporary design. Through the use of techniques like lost wax casting, they create volumetric objects that are unique, emphasizing the interaction between the object's presence and the ethereal qualities of aluminum.

The ***Stress Limit*** project was born from a series of questions: what are the boundaries of the material, what sensations does it evoke, what are its limits? *Stress Limit* defines the maximum stress a material can withstand before breaking by subjecting it to applied forces such as tension, compression, and shear: an ongoing investigation into the sensuous dimension of matter, laying it bare through various experimental processes.

Through the exploration of the intersection between contemporary art and collectible design, this show highlights the transformative potential of creative innovation to challenge the status quo, encouraging the embrace of new perspectives and a deeper appreciation for the dynamic relationship between art, design, and their use. *Don't Get Too Comfortable* serves as a reminder **to embrace discomfort, curiosity, and change** in our exploration of art and design.

We would like to thank Annalisa Rosso, Mr. Lawrence studio for their support.

Circolo is an art and design platform, created by art collectors Nicole Saikalis Bay and Matteo Bay, for emerging and established artists to showcase their works, connect with like-minded individuals, and gain exposure within the wider art community. Contemporary art and design are central to Circolo's research. Its founders are eager to create interdisciplinary connections and dialogues between different mediums within the same space.
Circolo is a community of art lovers, artists, curators, and creatives who are passionate about pushing the boundaries of contemporary art and exploring new frontiers. In addition to its exhibitions, Circolo hosts a program of events and talks that provide opportunities for visitors to engage with the art community, learn about contemporary art practices, and participate in the creative process.
Circolo encourages critical thinking across disciplines by providing a space to work and exhibit, an environment to create, and a space for the development of ideas.
Taking inspiration from Nicole Saikalis Bay's impactful work as a charity patron, consultant, and collector, Circolo hosts the activities of the Saikalis Bay Foundation, in the heart of Milan.

INFORMATIONS
A Capsule exhibition produced in collaboration with CARA \ DAVIDE, Duccio Maria Gambi, Marco Guazzini, TIPSTUDIO
Hosted by: CIRCOLO
Produced and Curated by: Nicole Saikalis Bay
Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Design Week hours: open all week, Monday, April 15 to Sunday, April 21, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (including weekends) / Closed for private viewing Monday, April 15 (3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

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