

Mario Trimarchi. Slow, Furious, and Inspirational

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Meeting an architect who decided to design objects for women, from objects for make-up to jewelry. And does it from a point of view that is totally different from the norm.

“Breath on Your Neck.” We’ll start with a necklace to speak of its designer. In his words, the piece is “unexpected like a whimsical thought, asymmetrical like a rainy morning, disorderly like freewheeling dreams.”

The designer in question is renowned Italian architect and designer Mario Trimarchi. In Italy, jewelry has often enjoyed the attention of seemingly unrelated fields. And sometimes the results are remarkable.

The necklace in question is part of the Alessi line entitled La stanza dello Scirocco, or “The Sirocco Room”, which also includes products like table centerpieces, candle holders, fruit bowls and garbage bins.



So who is Mario Trimarchi? His career is significant, linked to projects for brands like Matsushita, Philips, Serafino Zani, Artemide, and the Deborah Group. He also participated in the Olivetti Design Studio, designing banking terminals and personal computers. Only in recent years has he begun to collaborate with Alessi. And with them, he now carries on his reflections on the geometry, story and meaning of his objects. We meet him following a 'creative' and illuminating presentation at the Alessi showroom in Soho.

We were sorry we hadn't brought our cameras to film the event, but at least we were able to have a chat with Trimarchi. "I'm a very fortunate architect," e says, "because I've been able to carry out research. This isn't easy these days... you have to work for someone, an industry, a business. But you must carve out time for research—it's the only way anything can happen. Today, the only way to bring about a design is to start from a point of view that is totally different from the norm. We've had enough of normal. Everything is too alike, too homogenous.

I try to do something origin every time I approach a project, whether it's for a large company or a small one." But Trimarchi's research is not an abstract affair—his work has strong ties to reality. Speaking about photography, for example, he says he doesn't want to show his creations with fake lighting or retouches. "I want real photographs, not fake ones. There was no Photoshop back when I started. I think the world is a richer place with Photoshop, but some people choose not to use it. Photoshop makes everything perfect now. There are no more imperfections, no more errors. Reality is made of errors, it's rich with errors. We should be rich with our own diversity. I think these years have become much poorer—there is more sameness now. Perfection is being yourself without assimilating to a model. We're at risk of creating a world where everything is clean, and all the people are perfect, beautiful."

Proud to be Italian, he mentioned his region more than once during his presentation. "My Sicilian side is very important to me. Sicily is a mix. When you live on an island, you know yourself better and you know other people better, you care for other people. When you're at the center of the world you don't see anyone else, when you're in NYC you don't think about anyone else." And he sums himself up in a single slogan of two words and a conjunction: Slow and Furious.

Very often it's much better to be slower. To be slow and furious when putting something together is very important. You have to be in contact with my objects to understand them, their history, their story, with an attitude that is slow and furious at the same time." But why has an architect decided to design jewelry for women? "I've been designing objects for women for a long time. For example, I've designed quite a few objects for make-up. These objects started with the concept that they had to fit in the hand. Like make-up fits in the hand. I begin with a form to arrive to something useful. But women today lead a frenetic life, so I can't create calm objects. For example, 'The Ring is Coming with Me' has to communicate what a woman does every morning: she looks in the mirror and knows she's beautiful, but she also knows if she had a little more time she could be even more beautiful."

And our curiosity only grows. What comes first for him, object or inspiration? "The object appears at the end, but sometimes it never appears. I started to draw the wind without knowing where it would take me. I did a live drawing of the clouds and built a relationship of past, present and future with them. You have to remember what the cloud looked like five seconds ago, you have to see how it is now and you have to think about how it will look five seconds from now. This is a very interesting and involving exercise. I still don't know what I'm going to do with my clouds."

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