

GULF INTERIORS

SOURCING DESIGN

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Living light

Get ready for the lighting low-down this month. First up, an interview with a fresh addition to Dubai's lighting scene, followed by insight into an innovative new LED range, we round off with a whirlwind tour of some magical new lighting projects and a preview of this year's must-attend lighting event. Flick the switch.

Greek handmade lighting company, F+M Fos now has an augmented presence in Dubai thanks to the newly opened B5 Art of Living showroom where its bespoke pieces are drawing a lot of attention. According to B5's Patricia Boettcher F+M Fos creates functional art, or "living light" by challenging convention with its striking designs and use of gold and silver leaf, semi-precious stones and metallic netting.

Lead designer and one of the founders of F+M Fos, Fragiskos Bitros speaks to Gulf Interiors about the latest collections, energy efficiency and design and his expectations for the regional market.

Q Describe F+M Fos' latest collection: design concepts, inspiration, materials...

Lighting reminiscent of a petrified bunch of flowers by F+M Fos





A We use materials like silver leaf, 14-carat gold leaf, metallic netting, thorns, precious or semi-precious stones and an assortment of woods. Each design is an autonomous entity in itself and I therefore find it hard to speak of a collection as a homogenous whole. However, what links everything together is the aim of creating a theatrical sensation with a dynamic individual touch.

Personally, I am inspired by a wide array of stimuli. For example in 'Roots' I was inspired by a yoga exercise; the notion of taking root in the ground, spreading out and grounding one's self to feel whole and secure.

Sometimes a design, on the other hand, is dictated by the material, as was the case of 'Gladiator'.

I had been searching for this material for years and I had to travel

all the way to India to find it! The material is worn by divers for the study and filming of sharks, but for me, it was reminiscent of medieval warriors. Soldiers in armor have always been part of my imagery.

Are there any overriding trends in lighting at the moment?

It is my role as designer to be open them, to perceive them and give them a material form. To me, the most vital aspect is that my creations succeed in establishing contact with their users. That the person who will choose to acquire one of my designs not to merely place it somewhere, but to become "involved" with it and include it in his or her personal landscape. When this occurs, 'trends' seem so futile in comparison. Besides, a real trend only ever originates from the users at large.

How does providing energy efficient lighting influence the design?

All of my designs can harbour energy efficient light sources. However, as things stand at the moment this, more often than not, affects the aesthetic outcome because these bulbs are still rather unattractive both in their physical shape, material and size, as well as the quality of light they provide. They give out a cold white light that creates a very alienating effect and are also hard to include in a design because of their unaccommodating shape.

Fluidity of light quality is of paramount importance in my designs. The light and its interaction with shades and colours can dominate a space. Nevertheless, I am confident that as technology advances, these impediments will soon be eliminated.

Roots was inspired by a yoga move

What is F+M Fos' current involvement in the Middle Eastern market?

An introduction into the Middle East in 2008 was followed by a series of collaborations through 2010, including partnerships with such prestigious companies as Saudi Oger. A plethora of projects with several architectural and interior design companies paved the way for F+M Fos to establish in the Middle East.

I believe that the concept at the heart of F+M Fos is a perfect fit for the Middle East, whether on account of the materials we favour or because of the dramatic design of our collections, which have an almost fairytale-like quality. With this in mind, our recent partnership with B5 The Art of Living, which allows us to showcase our work, seemed a natural progression.

What are the expectations going forward now that the brand is represented through B5?

Our association with such a dynamic firm as B5 The Art Of Living represents a challenging new era in business for us. As a designer I strive to emphasise the aesthetic harmony within a modern dwelling and I aspire, as indeed does Patricia, to interconnect the lighting with the spaces that host the very core of our lives.

Needless to say that no two clients are the same and no two homes are the same. As far I am concerned, individuality is a key factor. This collaboration will allow me to enrich my perception and understanding of the multiple facets of Middle Eastern culture. At the end of the day, it's all about understanding and evolving.



The material for Gladiator was sourced in India



Cubario by Brusapasquè studio

Editor's pick: The curious Cubario

Cubario is a light design by Studio Brusapasquè based in Varese, Italy. The designers describe the cube as "an extraordinarily simple and regular solid, an icon of the Earth." To us it is an imaginative and original lighting creation that reminds us of planets...

Cubario was created by Brusapasquè studio for an exhibition of design products made out of Liguria slate and marble. The six-faced compound encircles a sphere like two hands

closed together to conserve precious goods. In designer speak: "Every blended hand is a half sphere and the two hands together remind of a full sphere that contains light. The idea of a light between the hands takes us to our childhood, when there were fireflies in the meadows around the lake and we used to hold them in our hands for a few seconds." Let the images speak for themselves