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the architecture & interior design international magazine | middle east

THE ART[IST]HOUSE

Focus: a quartet of art-houses
Jimmie Durham & Maria Thereza Alves
Giuliano Gori, Luca Pignatelli
Studio M Abboud Malak

INSIDE



Kengo Kuma
Westway Architects
Exclusiva Design
Renata Picone

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024 THE ART[IST]HOUSE

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Exclusiva Design

Work
Mountain Chalet
Location
St. Moritz, Switzerland
Year of Completion
December 2013
Architecture and Design
Exclusiva Design srl
Design Director
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Size and total area
1.200 m²
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The balance of the sketch beyond the idea: a chalet in St. Moritz



«The secret is not in the solution, but in the process which has occupied the mind» (T. Terzani). Located on the shores of the great lake of St. Moritz, the structure is called the "Cube" for its essential and modern shape which moves away from the typical local architecture, but retains the local character in the partial overlay made of wooden boards and masonry skirting-boards of rustic stone. The large floor to ceiling windows welcome light announcing the continuous dialogue between internal and external. The interiors have been entirely curated by Exclusiva Design. With branches in Rome and three other countries around the world - Russia, China, and United Arab Emirates - the company distinguishes itself by its way of interpreting the needs of its clients, following a sartorial approach, working with the talent and tradition of 'Made in Italy' and unifying the dexterity of craftsmanship with new technologies and innovative materials. The chalet is located on a steep incline that embraces the building's three floors from top to bottom. A space filter leads towards the sumptuous >





salon, dominated by an imposing table made of a unique fossil oak trunk which is over 12 centimeters thick. The surfaces and the furniture aim to spark a tactile emotion. Close to the basaltic rock there are precious textures of warm winter colours. White underlines the slight piers and the false ceiling which creates geometric shapes, giving the illusion of a slim structure in which walls are close to one another. A modern element of tradition. On the light, wooden and glass stairs that link the three floors there is a high decorative panel, one of the several works realised by the artists of Exclusiva. These recall the motifs of the landscape, giving the internal rooms that quiet which can be found in natural scenarios. In other rooms leaves, mountains and trees are also depicted across the panels. On the ground floor the bedrooms are divided and protected only by the light protrusion of the upper floor. The frames and the handles of the doors, the texture of the *boiserie*, the singularity of everything is the fruit of attentive research. The walls, which are painted in various shades of grey, are in contrast with the neutral and natural colours of the furniture. The craftsmen have transformed their drawings into unique custom tailored objects, like the handles of the master bedroom. On the lower ground floor the research for shapes and local tradition finishes in



perfect harmony with the most advanced contributions of technology and innovation. The zen garden with a primitive beauty and timelessness, keeps soul and nature in perfect harmony. The water of the swimming pool is lapped by the light of the skylights which open up angles onto a sky at night full of stars. An excellent smart home hub ensures the comfort and wellbeing of the chalet also thanks to the high-end system in the home cinema, as well as throughout the villa. In this project, architecture, art and design build together a tale of elegance. The chalet reaches the balance which has made Exclusiva design win the International Design Awards 2015 of the "Society of British and International Design". We asked architect Fabio Mazzeo, design director, to tell us more about the company's approach. **What is the keyword that defines your company?** «A word that summarises our approach is research: Exclusiva works around the clients, formulating every activity according to their needs and exploring the input received in the research of materials, systems and functions. We believe that the role of the interior designer is to work transversally by using the different skills of the players who daily attend our world (craftsmen, designers, technicians, project managers). >



The project must not be self-referential, ignoring the client's needs, instead it must be the result of a transversal approach: a daily task of fine tuning, based on the reception of emotional signals and clues which derive from the dialogue with the client».

How do you manage to interpret the client's needs?

«Research, for us, begins by listening, getting to know the client's world, and trying to provoke reflection. The type of client who often comes to us already has a clear idea of his needs, but our role is to accompany him through these new territories of knowledge, by igniting "different" reasoning from their *status quo*. The final result considers many factors

(needs, necessities, sensitivity) which have to be fed by further knowledge and points of view, unexpected declinations that we as designers, as experts in this field, have the task and the possibility to ignite. It's a game for two. Every project is a journey that has to be made together, an experience made by both parties. It doesn't matter if it's a flat in the centre of Beijing, a master plan in Russia, or a villa in the United Arab Emirates, behind every project there is always an interlocutor. Sometimes it's an independent client, other times it's an organization, political bodies or private groups, who represent a collective vision. At the moment, for example, we are busy with a new urban project in Saint Petersburg, the Lakhta Center of the Gazprom Group.



Exclusiva is the key contractor for the interior design and it's incredible how in over 600,000 m² there's a concentration of many of the citizen's interests. Certainly the bigger the volumes are, the more complex proportionally the interactions are as well, with Exclusiva looking after many projects as well as turnkey projects. You have to better determine the proportions of the tools but the process remains the same: you need to keep the same pace and live the experience together».

How does your team manage to keep the craftsmanship and 'Made in Italy' tradition at the fore?

«We strongly believe in the *nouvelle vague* which thanks to, as some people call it, the fourth industrial revolution (smart

manufacturing), reveals what we were expecting: an innovative update that makes human work easier without giving up the creative capacity of craftsmanship. While architecture appears to be unbalanced regarding the instrumental/technological aspect, interior design is more balanced. In fact, different dimensions assume different attentions: the more the aspect of an object is perceivable, the greater its value becomes.

Perception plays a fundamental role in our capacity to define beauty in what surrounds us: an interior design object has to be investigated at a molecular level in order to give even more expressive characteristics. These characteristics are able to communicate not only the preciousness,

singularity or stylishness of a treatment, but also a small invention linked to the details or to the light that strikes it. The technical-project work becomes perceptive, almost psychological.

When we operate in the interior we shouldn't forget that what we design has to be touched, lived, brushed and smelled. We cannot ignore such needs. Exclusiva has a structure dedicated to research in this specific field: a company which looks after high-end adornment, which investigates into the superficial aspect of things, their skin. The surface, as an intermediary between interiors and exteriors, is surely the principal object of observation for a designer. Moreover, we share our excellence with specialists from every

sector (masters of marble and texture, joiners and glassworkers) and with the big production companies of Italian design, alternating the innovation of materials or *ad hoc* manufacture with technology and ancient knowledge. This project is a clear example of our philosophy». Preferring the use of not-mass produced objects, the interior design which characterises the "Cube" of St. Moritz distinguishes itself from many projects which are currently *en vogue*. And, when reconsidering the craftwork, Exclusiva has achieved a rare balance between tradition and modernity providing a significant example of the quality of Italian design.

Maurizio Peticarini

