**VEGAN DESIGN – Or the Art of Reduction**

**by Erez Nevi Pana**

**curated by Maria Cristina Didero**

**Spazio Sanremo**

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The exhibition *VEGAN DESIGN – or the Art of Reduction*, presented in occasion of the 2018 Milan Design Week within the ambitious 5 Vie program, is a unique opportunity to discover the work of a bright talent on the international design scene. Each object by Eres Nevi Pana’s different collections is made in compliance with the rules of a specific ethical position, and it gives an answer to a specific question: is it possible to conceive design without using any kind of material derivated from animals? With his work as well as his strict but emotional approach, Nevi Pana shows us that it is actually possible.

A vegan himself, born in Israel in 1983, Erez Nevi Pana studied at the Eindhoven Academy. Through his works, Nevi Pana transfers his attitude of deep respect towards life, human beings and nature to his design methodology by refusing to use any kind of product containing animal molecules, such as fabrics (wool, leather) or any other material which is normally used in design (rubber gloves, paint, plastics, resin, industrial glues). We could say that Erez Nevi Pana’s works are produced within some sort of a diet, by carrying on an ethical subtraction - or reduction – deeply rooted in cleverness and research. The author finds different ways to reach his goal. Nevi Pana attitude’s is similar per imagination and fantasy to gastronomic recipes without meat, eggs and dairy products: his researches and experiments have the purpose to fine-tune functional materials that are consistent with his ideas of creating life-friendly, extremely elegant, and beautiful objects.

To assemble his pieces, the young designer uses plant substances and minerals, usually focusing on those coming from his native country. The most emblematic example of his *modus operandi* could be the *Salt* project, that originates from the evocative Dead Sea and is outsourced to the powerful potentials of salt, an element with a great symbolic power in itself. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on Earth; its highly salty water prevents any kind of living-being to survive: that’s the reason why it can be considered the most vegan place on Earth.

Finished with a *vegan* glue invented by the designer himself, *Salt* stools in the exhibition are made with carpenter’s wood waste, through the lens of recycling. They are immersed in water and fixed to the sea bottom; salt random crystallization on surfaces generates pure white foulings which gives a new shape and thickness to the original objects with a layer of natural salt becoming a new skin for the original object. The transformation occurs in an unpredictable way. *Salt* escapes the author’s control and it is an extraordinary example of the power of nature and time.

Time and sedimentation are the starting points of another collection of works too. The idea comes from a journey in India, where the word recycling has very arcane meaning, highly connected with the poor economic conditions of the Indian people; *Wasted* baskets are made of poor materials (bamboo, seeds) or any other kind of waste or left over to originate a “recycling cycle” focusing on the origin, by leaving out any worthless excess. The aim is to look at essentiality conceiving recreation as reduction. As always, Erez Nevi Pana work also pays a special attention on how beauty, colors and textures are able to fuel our gaze and feelings. Nevi Pana’s woven baskets are polished with a special varnish coming from a blend of ground cashew nuts shells: a dark and shiny surface able to catch the eyes and stimulate touch.

*Lot’s Wife* is another sophisticated collection made of vegan-clay objects, on which Nevi Pana shaped salt sedimentation. Once again, this cycle – whose title recalls the notorious legend from the Bible – stands out as a challenge against modern society as well as its blindness and destructive actions, inspiring a reflection on our relation towards history and mythology.

It is possible to find animal traces also in some glue used to improve the sheet’s resistance and flexibility of paper. Nevi Pana’s vegan-paper not only contains vegetable-based elements but also its artisan process guarantees a product that is 100% vegan. Following the same idea, the wonderful clothes of *Peace Silk* are made in full respect of the world’s creatures: for their production, the designer awaits for the butterfly to exit the cocoon by itself and, only then, collects the silk deposited in it.

Nevi Pana’s delicate works shape a utopia that in our present time we often forget to even take into account, or to think about, as there would be no possibilities to deal with it, fully respecting any living being and environment. We do take for granted that strict rules help artists’ imagination and creativity, so the aim for an *ethical reduction* helped Erez Nevi Pana to trigger boundaries, encouraging him to shape objects that look like they belong to a different era, neither past nor future, but still very strongly anchored to Earth, and most of all to mankind. These objects, in fact, are intensely human: the author’s respect to life is evident and mirrored in their irregular surfaces as they release a peaceful, natural, and poetical splendor. Erez Nevi Pana’s work is unique under many aspects (research, approach, outlines) but, above all, free from guilt.

**Erez Nevi Pana**

The Israeli Erez Nevi Pana (Bnei Brak, Tel Aviv - 1983), defines himself as an explorer that uses design to investigate phenomena through materials’ experimentations. In 2015, in Eindhoven, he created La Terrasse, a self-managed platform where designers, artists and writers could work shoulder-to-shoulder, share thoughts, ideas and points of view about a specific issue, exhibit their works. As researcher in the field of materials, Nevi Pana offers his expert advice to companies and societies in the field of materials development and use in respect of environment. Furthermore, he elaborated an organic material made of a mixture of terrain, mushrooms and moss that is now part of the series *Soilid* of Holon’s permanent collection. He graduated from the Holon Institute of Technology (IL) and Nevi Pana gained a Master in Design from the Eindhoven Design Academy (NL). His thesis focused on the special salt re-crystallization, a method then patented, and that he keeps on testing.

Maria Cristina Didero

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