

# TOGETHER

OCTOBER 2020 / ISSUE 1

## Getting face to face with *Roberto Palomba*

### INTERVIEW

Ideal Standard's Chief Designer Officer narrates himself, revealing passions, projects and dreams. And how to imagine the house of tomorrow

## Le Grand *Bleu*

### PALETTE

The color of the year in 20 trendy objects. An invitation to calm and a return to classic

## New vision: *The Green Utopia*

### NEW HORIZONS

What will the cities of the future be like? And what about the dialogue with nature? Andrea Boschetti, architect and urban planner, winner of the Polcevera park in Genoa with Stefano Boeri and Petra Blaisse, provides the answers



Ideal Standard









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**EDITORIAL** 7  
*Go(o)d exists in details*



**INTERVIEW** 8  
*Getting face to face with Roberto Palomba*  
Internationally renowned designer and architect, he has been sharing his firm with Ludovica Serafini for twenty-five years. Ideal Standard's Chief Designer Officer narrates himself, revealing passions, projects and dreams. And how to imagine the house of tomorrow



**COVER STORY** 16  
*A dream come true*  
"Tessa observed the peeling walls and the pieces of plaster scattered a little everywhere on the old tiles. She imagined what it would be like after the renovation..."



**NEW HORIZONS** 24  
*A new vision: the Green Utopia*  
Green as a source of new life. A flexible organism that branches into urban spaces, bringing vital sap and naturally regulates people's lives. The future of cities passes through the design of city parks and ecological corridors



**PALETTE** 30  
*Le grand Bleu*  
Symbol of calm and balance, it is a timeless shade that expresses the desire for stability and sober elegance. Associated with the idea of purification, it recalls the depth of the oceans and the evening sky, inviting reflection and promoting resilience



**DESTINATIONS** 42  
*UK — A strong sense of innovation and craft*  
With more than 200 years of history and 1.5 million pieces produced every year for the healthcare, residential and contract sectors, the British philosophy of Ideal Standard is based on dynamism, research and dialogue



**WELL-BEING** 48  
*At hand*  
A world tour through soaps. Handcrafted, with exotic scents or floral fragrances. Discovering traditions, ancient customs and exclusive productions, transforming a habit into a sensual ritual



**OBJECTS** 52  
*From rituals to the forms of design*  
Everything starts from water: holy, purifying, precious, and from the need to collect it and offer it to believers. Design has put it on stage by designing washbasins with a strong personality, functional and elegant



**TALENTS** 60  
*Lifestyle Chemistry*  
Natural materials, very pure oils and an artist's touch. Liza Witte draws on the history of the earliest perfume bottles from the beginning of the 19th century when they were first designed as works of art. Today, she signs soap collections exhibited in museums throughout Europe





Above: Carpet Fragment, 1908, gouache on textured card  
 Le Corbusier is one of the most important architects and urban planners of the twentieth century. Today, more than eighty of his unpublished early drawings are exhibited at Teatro dell'architettura di Mendrisio to retrace the birth of an artistic vocation and to highlight the importance that the architect has always attributed to design and details.

Le Corbusier's early drawings. 1902-1916  
 Curated by Daniele Pauly  
 Until January 24, 2021, Teatro dell'Accademia di architettura  
 Mendrisio (CH)



## Go(o)d exists in details

There are moments in life that just feel different. The moments we feel most happy are when we share joy and achievement together. In the moments that scare us the most we find protection and confidence in being together. It was in such a moment this first edition of our new Together magazine was created.

Design needs to relate to daily life. Design blends into the culture all around us. Design lifts our spirit. The best design comes naturally and feels just right. The difference is in the details. Internationally renowned designer & architect, Roberto Palomba, talks in this issue about the roots of his inspiration.

In a volatile world stable reference points are valuable and provide clear orientation. Turbulent times separate the noise from the substance. British icon brand Armitage Shanks writes such a story. For more than 200 years, a guiding light in the turbulences of daily life.

We aim to contribute to the evolution of modern life. The 'Green Utopia' outlined in this magazine by urban designer Andrea Boschetti suggests a new balance between the demands of urban life and nature.

Color triggers emotion. In 'Le Grand Bleu' we explore a color that addresses the desire for stability, relaxation and elegance.

Time is precious. That's why we choose to spend time focusing on what really matters. We aim at simplifying the process of creation. To this aim we offer an Atelier that brings together people and the best of all crafts.

And we are inclusive, believing in the power of Together for Better.

## Torsten Türling

CEO, IDEAL STANDARD INTERNATIONAL



# Getting face to face with *Roberto Palomba*

*Internationally renowned designer and architect, he has been sharing his firm with Ludovica Serafini for twenty-five years. Ideal Standard's Chief Designer Officer narrates himself, revealing passions, projects and dreams. And how to imagine the house of tomorrow*



Courtesy of Poltrona Frau

The studio	Name: <b>Palomba Serafini Associati</b>	Founded: <b>1994</b>	Office: <b>Milan, Italy</b>	Collaborators: <b>25</b>
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A river in flood, energetic, positive, brimming with spirit of enterprise. Roberto Palomba, boasts 25 years of experience, but his stamina and curiosity are those of an athlete facing his first race. His solid position has long-standing, classical origins. Ancient, I dare say. Myths, gestures, primary needs, beauty and harmony. In his mind everything flows and is channelled into projects that solve problems, that are useful and functional for the people they have been conceived for. I am meeting him on Skype, as it is suitable during the present pandemic of Coronavirus.

**What's the meaning of being a designer today?**

If our society were perfect, we would not need creative people. Creativity is an answer, it was born in order to improve life and solve problems. Limits are required in order to start the process. It seems that creativity stems from our need of proteins: it started with hunting. In fact, man became ingenious and

developed his creativity in order to hunt. The first cave paintings depict hunting scenes, clearly anticipating the connection between feeding oneself and the act of creating. By ritualizing what is necessary, images cross the borders between action, creativity and divinity. We need ideas to feed our mind, give meaning to our life and to what we are doing. The mental structure of the man, which we consider to be developed and think we can control, shows instead how much we are still primitive. In fact, man's primary needs such as hunger, sleep, cold, love, sexual needs are primitive and uncontrollable. Can you manage not to fall in love? I can't, in fact I fall in love every day, because I am too curious"

**25 years of activity. If you look back, what wouldn't you do again and what are you interested in today?**

"The designer's job is always evolving and often holds the rudder over our choices. You live a little by generating and a little by undergoing the opportunities that your trade brings you. Over time, you build your experiences and these create synapses, which in turn develop by strengthening



Website: <a href="http://palombaserafini.com">palombaserafini.com</a>	Awards: <b>Compasso d'oro, Elle Decoration International Design Award, Red Dot, Good Design Award, Design Plus, German Design Award</b>	<b>70</b> Design companies relationships	<b>30</b> Architecture projects
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Being the Art Director of a company allows you to understand from within the technical, economic, commercial, social problems of a product

It is a scientific concept: a self-feeding process, which takes place on a psycho-chemical-physical level. So you are obliged to have as many experiences as possible. If I look at my work I would not leave anything behind, there is nothing I would not do again: this job is beautiful in all its aspects, the people you meet are beautiful, as well as its issues and the challenges to overcome. Planning means ongoing learning and discovering.

Every time you give up on a project, you weaken your growth. This is a profession with a thousand facets and a thousand connections. Being the Art Director of a company for instance, allows you to understand from within the technical, commercial, economic, social problems of a given product. The pure designer is limited in his vision, in his learning. So I would rephrase

your experience and your creative mind. The more competent we become, the more we strive to do more and better.

the question: what I would add to the work accomplished so far. The answer is easy: I would increase my focus on architecture. At the studio we are in fact cutting down design collaborations so to spend more time on architecture. I feel the need to work on spaces and focus on the product in a different way.

What’s more on your mind, public or private spaces?

Both, to be honest. We have recently worked on a bid for Lecce’s penitentiary and also on the renovation of the home of a public figure, Paolo Stella. Two extremely different projects. What they have in common is the psychological analysis of their future inhabitants. The space where you live is an intimate place. Paolo Stella’s obviously reflects the public figure: the house is also a place that tells about him and can become a digital stage. The Six Square Meters project, born from the meeting with Flavio De Carlo of the Lecce Architectural Association and the director of the prison Rita Russo, addresses other issues. Working while depriving you of all aesthetics has brought up

important questions. How do you help people recover by depriving them of beauty? Is there an existenzminimum beauty? Today, designers and architects cannot focus exclusively on beauty, there are other values to convey. Being able to generate comfort even in a few square meters is a great challenge because it forces you to think about people, about the human being as an individual, not as a category. What have radically changed in recent years are people’s behaviors and lifestyles. The house is the mirror of this transformation. There is no longer a typical family. There is the individual who lives in a huge house and the family of four people who share 50 square meters, there is the elderly person who needs help and who divides the house between work and private life. If once it was easy to think of a standard house - the plan almost always followed the same scheme - today everything must be customized. In the past we used to talk about pre-designed spaces, while today we have to customize each nook and cranny. It is certainly more demanding in terms of time, thought and costs. Today however, we have to design the complexity of the contemporary human being.

Today people’s well-being passes first through security. The bathroom plays a crucial role in this reciprocal game. Will the design of this space change?

The bathroom is a right and presently, for many companies, it has become a vested right. Sanitary fixtures are load-bearing elements of a house such as windows and floors, they are part of the design hardware. These months of lockdown have allowed us to get to know our home in more depth. The bathroom has revealed its multi-faceted functions. A place where to loosen up – where to isolate -, a place of regeneration - water has many beneficial effects on man -, a place for cleansing, of meeting with oneself but also with others. In the future, this room will be increasingly important in both private and public buildings. Smart working will force prolonged stays at home and simultaneously transform our home into a public and private place. Public toilets will have to respond to a greater demand for hygiene and safety. I am happy to work for Ideal Standard because it has always been concerned with bringing modernity to this space-right. And it has done



A classic revisited. Suspended version by Birdie, 2011, Foscarini.



Completed in 2016. The House Boat, private residence in Gallipoli.



Lama, the chaise longue designed for Zanotta in 2006.



With its organic shape created with hand-blown glass, Gregg is available in different sizes. 2007, Foscarini.



A collection conceived for outdoors, Grandpliè. 2010, Driade.



Archaic shapes and recalls of the best American design: Be Bop, 2017, Kartell.



A professional restauration. Palazzo Daniele, now a Boutique Hotel, has been respectfully redesigned by Ludovica and Roberto Palomba. Living in one of the 9 suites is like diving into the best present and past Italian cultural atmosphere.



Italian design stands out for harmony, balance, elegance and character. Let it be sofa incorporates all this. 2017. Poltrona Frau.



Light, playful and suitable for any space. It’s Sissi Chair, designed in 2017 for Driade.



Apsara, outdoor sofa, 2017, Giorgetti.



Creativity and destruction, which are part of the human kind, must find a new balance, just as urban areas will have to interchange more with nature

so from the very beginning by involving the most influential figures of design: Gio Ponti, Achille Castiglioni, Paolo Tilche, Gae Aulenti, just to name a few. Continuing on this road is a difficult but very

stimulating challenge. The question lies in how to customize a new normal, new standards for the bathroom.

Rem Koolhaas inaugurated the exhibition “Countryside, the Future” at the Guggenheim Museum in NYC - and said that the countryside is the true technological incubator of our times. Will cities remain the point of reference and attraction or will new lifestyles develop far from urban areas?

We could define 2020 as the year heralding a new beginning. We are witnessing the true digital revolution. Our life has changed, our

work is changing, our daily relationships are different. Forced to stay put, we are obliged to think more. Digital ubiquity allows less physical interaction and fewer displacements. Nature has shown its teeth - we exploit unscrupulously the Planet and the Nature which, being more intelligent than us and with greater adaptability - and has proven capable of bringing us to our knees.

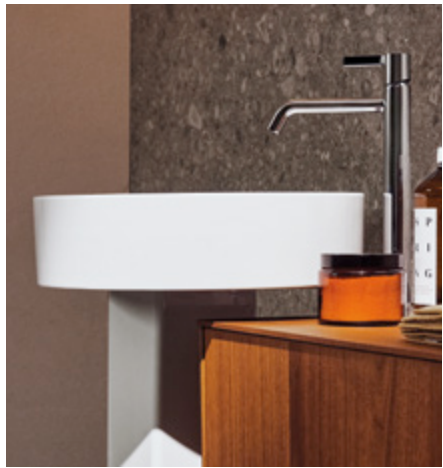
Creativity and destruction, which are part of the human kind, must find a new balance, just as urban areas will have to interchange more with nature. Cities are now mental rather than physical fortifications. The dialogue is the meeting point for bio-diversity. The ecological corridors push me to think of a city of the future.

Recovering the urban planning structure of the cardo and decumanus I am led to consider green paths and protected areas where nature can maintain its independence. In the most ancient cities, old tracks and railway yards could be converted. They are already doing it: an example is the New York High Line.

Future generations have the task to conceive the new society. We are trying to pass on the baton in the best way 🙏



Simplifying designs, creating a new colour palette, updating the signs of the past. With respect and a clear focus on contemporary trends, Ludovica+Roberto Palomba have created Atelier Collections, a new addition to the design culture at Ideal Standard.



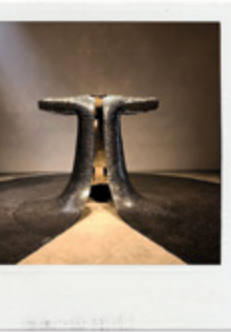
From top-left: Conca Washbasin; Conca faucet e Joy faucet. 2019, Ideal Standard.



The sitting room of the Palomba house in Sogliano Cavour in the Lecce area. Opened in 2013.



*"I am a child of the 60s who does not want to grow up". Between nature and science fiction, flowers and deserts to fill, we discover the designer's poetic and imaginative side*



### Projected into the Future

Seoul, South Korea. In the metropolis animated by pop culture and breathtaking skyscrapers, there is an ancient soul made up of Buddhist temples and museums full of history.



### The Art of Flying

Dumbo, cartoon, 1941, Walt Disney. The baby elephant is laughed at for having big ears until he discovers he can fly using them as wings.

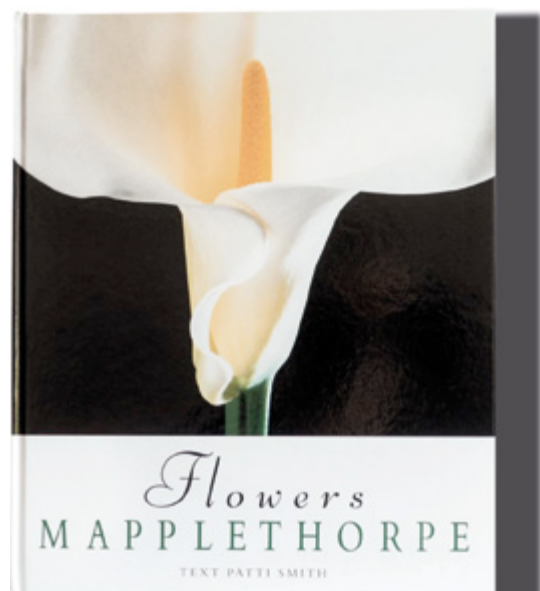


### A Dream

Star Wars, George Lucas, 1977. An imaginary galaxy, in an unspecified era, a universe inhabited by humans and other living species.



Courtesy Schirmer/Mosel Verlag GmbH



### The Aesthetics of Passion

Robert Mapplethorpe. Eroticism dominates his photographs, even those dedicated to flowers. A balance of volumes and shapes in an aesthetic harmony of absolute precision.



### The Beauty of Small Things

Tales of the pillow by Sei Shōnagon, Japanese writer and poetess, companion of the Empress Teishi. Datable around 1000 A.D.

### The Immortality of the Sign

Eames House, Los Angeles, 1945. Iconic house of the great designers Charles and Ray Eames. Sophisticated example of American Modernism. The Furniture and objects designed for the house are at MoMa in New York.



Eames House

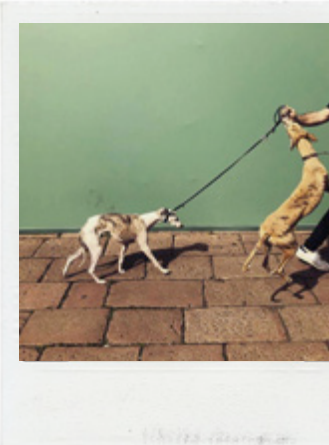


Courtesy Al koor. Tourism di Piero Rossi



### The Myth

The Wall, Pink Floyd, 1982. From the music of the timeless English group, the film with same name directed by Alan Parker, film adaptation of the concept album.



### Pure Love

Goku, Whippet. Together with George they are inseparable companions.

### The Space of Ideas.

Rub 'al-Khali, Oman. The desert is a magical, absolute and unique place.





COVER STORY

# A DREAM COME TRUE

by Marina Gersony

PHOTO Carlo William Rossi + Fabio Mureddu



# A NEW BATHROOM IT SHOULD BE



BRIGHT, WELCOMING  
AND ABOVE ALL  
SPACIOUS.

Tessa observed the peeling walls and the pieces of plaster scattered a little everywhere on the old tiles. She imagined what it would be like after the renovation, a functional space that would reflect her sense of beauty and personality. The penthouse that her parents had given her as a present was in the old part of the city, on the top floor of a period building in the centre. Andrea, her husband, was in charge of restoring and renovating the property. In three or four months, the newlyweds would finally come into possession of that apartment with a priceless view on the Roman forums. Tessa squatted on the floor and fantasized about how to organise the place careful not to trip over the bathroom fixtures. She leafed through a glossy furniture magazine, but nothing seemed to strike her in particular: everything seemed banal, excessively glitzy, or uninspiring. She, who had lived her childhood and adolescence in a large family, had always found refuge in one of the four bathrooms of their large house, the most

intimate place where you can find a little silence in an atmosphere of peace. She thought of her brothers who used to tease her by banging on the door with their fists:

"Tessa / the princess / staring at the mirror for hours / admiring her reflected face," they would sing out loud laughing like crazy. Tessa had paid no attention to it. In the bathroom she could isolate herself, dream and estrange herself from the world. It was the place of purification of body and soul, the temple of pure contemplation and recollection; only there was she able to shape her thoughts and reconnect with herself.

Diving into the clouds of steam that came up from the tub was a mystical experience, a ritual that reconciled her with the world and which she would never give up. In the bathroom she had made important decisions; she had spent hours trying to understand herself and others; she had made long phone calls with her closest friends, away from the prying ears of her family; always in the bathroom, she had confided in Cora, her best











friend, sitting for hours on the edge of the tub despite the grumbling of her parents who over time had resigned themselves to what they considered a childish extravagance to forgive. Tessa measured the space with her eyes and calculated that it was large enough to host an elegant and enveloping bathtub. She visualized several models she had seen on Google and imagined herself bathed in a fluffy, voluptuous foam. Meanwhile, her mind continued to wander, until it slowly slipped into the memories of two years earlier, when she had met Andrea at a memorable pool party.

September 2018, a villa by the sea, a light late summer breeze and a starry sky, Tessa and her friend Cora, a diehard fashionista, had spent the whole afternoon deciding how to dress for that "black pool party", where it was imperative to

wear something black to be admitted. The young woman opted for an elegant 60s pyjamas in an optical black version, with trousers embellished with a thin white side band. The contrast between the black pyjamas and the long red hair had a striking effect.

The evening turned out to be fun right from the start. After copious drinks, wild dances, dives in the pool, improvised water volleyball games, let alone the water balloons that sparked the hilarity of those present, around midnight some boys gathered in a circle around the pool to play a group game. Some suggested the classic spin of the bottle, some others that of "spot the liar", others instead playing charades; in the end, however, they all opted for a mime game. One of the boys applied to form the two teams. Each one, in turn, had to choose their team's mime and a word related to a place, a house or a city for the rival team to guess. Whoever could guess the most words would win. After a brief consultation, Tessa suggested miming a bathroom, an un-

sual idea that was enthusiastically welcomed by members of her team who appointed her "official mime". Tessa initially scoffed. She was a brilliant young woman who did everything she could not to be noticed, that evening however, she had drunk a little more than she should, which made her feel more sociable, uninhibited and sexier than usual. After all, even children know that alcohol - in moderate doses - can dissolve inhibitions. The girl straightened her shoulders trying to assume a correct posture. Unable to speak or move her lips according to the rules of the game, she improvised a series of facial expressions and gestures to try to make herself understood.

She pretended the walls were real, as were the sink, bidet, tub, and shower; she also pretended that the wall was painted in different colors; she imagined surfaces smooth, rough, damp, dry, cold or hot. Her body reacted as if by magic to the illusion while she was convinced that everything was real. She pushed gently towards the wall with her hands and as if in a trance she manipulated space and matter to create a place that did not exist except in her mind. She ran a hand along the imaginary edges of the tub mimicking the movement of the legs and then the feet ... first the left, then the right, to finally immerse herself with her whole body in a vaporous white foam. Without realizing it, Tessa had captured the attention of her audience by showing off unexpected artistic skills. Suddenly she woke up as if from a dream. She felt the bystanders' gaze on her. A girl from the opposing team announced triumphantly: "I got it! It's a swimming pool"; another boy echoed: "No, it's a waterfall high up in the mountains", while a third, staring at her, approached her and said with conviction: "You're really good, it's a bathroom." His name was Andrea, he was a handsome boy in a tuxedo sporting an amused air. Tessa's eyes widened as if the young man hadn't been real. She felt her heart pounding. "Come on, guys, we won, let's all go for a nice shower and toast". Andrea took the girl by the hand and with a glass of Pinot in the other dragged her into one of the luxurious bathrooms of the villa followed by her friends. He threw himself into the tub fully dressed while Tessa couldn't believe her eyes. The mirror reflected a fully clothed man laughing as if it were the most normal thing in the world to do. This was how she met Andrea, the one who, two years later, would become her husband.

Tessa awoke from her dream. She was back in the present, leaning against the wall of her future bathroom in the attic where her new life with Andrea would soon begin. She went to the window and looked at the Roman forums, magnificent in their imposing beauty. She smiled and thought that life is beautiful.





# A new vision: *the Green Utopia*

*Green as a source of new life.  
A flexible organism that branches into urban spaces,  
brings vital sap and naturally regulates people's lives.  
The future of cities passes through the design  
of city parks and ecological corridors*



The studio	Name: <b>Metrogramma</b>	Founded: <b>1998</b>	Office: Milan, Moscow, New York	Partners: <b>5</b>
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Let's do an experiment. A change of perspective. Let's try to imagine the ideal city from above instead of below. Let's look at it as if it were an organism, an interconnected system feeding itself naturally. Just like a game, we draw lines connecting the green belts that include urban spaces and internal parks. These junctions, just like arteries, bring life, protect biodiversity and nourish the system. All around lie the urban spaces full of infinite green ramifications. In this period marked by the pandemic, we have

**This pandemic has taught us that it is time for a revolution that has been triggered by nature, which is passing us its message in an impactful way: it demands total respect**

understood that the balance regulating human life on earth has been disrupted. It is no longer a problem for ecologists, but a need involving all of us personally. The question which arises is therefore reasonable: what do we have to do in order to restore the order between us and nature? We asked Andrea Boschetti, architect and urban planner, founder of Metrogramma studio, which has been involved for years in designing and redesigning metropolitan spaces both in Italy and around the world.

**What role should green spaces play in our daily life?**

A crucial issue that we have presently understood is that the respect for the environment in which we live is not just an ethical issue, but something of paramount importance. The word sustainability has been used for too long in a suitable, utilitarian way, especially aimed at selling something. Its true meaning has never been pondered upon. This pandemic has taught us that it is time for a revolution. I'm using this word in a distinctive and sustainable way. The revolution has been triggered by nature, which is passing us its message in an impactful way: it demands total respect.

**To re-establish the right balance between nature and city, what must change in practice?**

There are structural measures and single actions. First of all, in Italy a law should be voted on the authority pertaining to architecture and urban planning. Regulating the relationship



Website: <a href="http://www.metrogramma.com">www.metrogramma.com</a>	Director: <b>Andrea Boschetti</b>	Awards: <b>Habitat BZ 2001, Gold Medal for Italian Architecture, Domus Malles (INARCH Prize 2010)</b>
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Genoa. Rendering of the future Polcevera Park and the Red Circle.  
The project still under construction bears the signature of Metrogramma, Stefano Boeri and Inside Outside.

Previous pages, on the left. Green Community Office Building, Competition, 2020; Metrogramma  
At page 23. Picture of Andrea Boschetti.  
Aside. Public city map, Territorial Government Plan of Milan, completed in 2008.



Projects

Milan Zoning Plan (PGT 2011); Scalo Milano City Style (2016), VIPs Buildings in the area of the Losail Marina in Doha, Qatar, tourist establishment dedicated to the world of skiing, named “Sunny Valley”, in the Urals, Russia, Parco Polcevera, Genova 2019. He is currently the Scientific Director of all the events promoted by the Innovation Design District Milan - Porta Nuova, Porta Volta and head of the London-based design of The One Atelier, an international company specialized in luxury real estate. In September 2019, together with Stefano Boeri and Petra Blaisse, he won the international bid for the reconstruction of the “Quadrante Val Polcevera – il Cerchio Rosso (the red circle) and the Parco del Ponte” in Genoa.



Above. NYC Boulevard & Broadway, Slow city planning, 2009 ; Metrogramma with ETH Zurigo, Politecnico di Torino, Università Federico II di Napoli.

between planners and administrations would enable thinking about long-term structured interventions and not about those stretching over a five-year period. In other words: architects must design without being conditioned by politics, while politicians must govern without launching slogans. In this way, even urban planners and architects would take back a little bit of responsibility in designing cities. Then there are the people. We are all called in to change our habits. I know it is very difficult, but there are no alternatives. We must take advantage of this lock-down period: make the most of technology by practising more smart working and cutting down meetings that can be held on-line, using the bicycle more, being careful not to throw cigarette butts on the street, being more attentive about separate collection, producing less waste.

How should cities change?

Over the past fifty years, cities have been conceived as against nature. If we consider the infrastructure development between the 70s and the 80s, we can only see that traffic engineering has erased the last traces of nature in the city and built clear separations between those who want to take a walk or ride a bicycle and those who need to move quickly. Everything related to a slow-paced life has been cut to a minimum: squares have become crossroads, boulevards motorways. The natural environment has been reduced to the planting of hedges. Today 85% of urban spaces is intended for mobility and only 15% for people who move slowly. Cities however are made up of people. It is necessary to reconsider the space of mobility - in any case it must be smaller, electric and clean – in parallel with that of the natural city. This is the right time to do it, everyone is asking for it, but we need to redesign the spaces. There is a lot to be done and there would be many structural investments in public welfare to be defined.

How to safeguard biodiversity?

Nature is a system: it doesn't matter how much green there is in a city, but how it is planned. The birds and squirrels in London move through ecological corridors that amazingly increase the ability to transfer precious bioclimatic and fauna assets even in the heart of the metropolis. Now that we have reduced traffic and move less, we look with amazement at the presence of deer in the city and a goose in the centre of the village. This confirms that the city has been

working ecologically as a system. The ecological corridors - real arteries that connect green areas even far away from each other - are important not only because they improve the quality of our life, but because they strengthen nature itself. Connecting the environmental systems that are inside and outside cities as much as we can is the task of urban planners in the coming years.

What importance do parks have in cities?

The need for open spaces will increasingly be a necessity. And the parks in the metropolis a reality to be organized. I am thinking of Parco Sud in Milan, mainly a manufacturing area, little known to the city dwellers. If it were upgraded as an urban park it would be the largest in Europe. During this period it could host an open-air school. And it would be an example for the whole world. In Great Britain, for example, they are monitoring all the places where they can develop outdoor educational activities. It is important that each neighbourhood, district or micro municipality has its own park connected to other green areas. The parks can host theatres, areas for sports, children, for reading, restaurants, bars. However, the quality of the parks is directly proportional to the quality of the services it offers. We need to design sources for drinking water, equip them with high-quality, self-cleaning, touchless toilets, capable of guaranteeing safety.

Together with Stefano Boeri, Petra Blaisse and Laura Gatti you are working on the Polcevera park in Genoa. What kind of park will it be?

Above, the Morandi bridge designed by Renzo Piano connecting very large geographical areas: France and Italy. It does not deal with the communities that have been affected by its collapse. The Polcevera park has the task of regenerating the two sides of the valley that have been injured. It is conceived as a system of parks with different ecology and infrastructure concepts. There will be an industrial park, a memory park, a combined bike-pedestrian lane leading to the station. It will host an innovation center, a green factory, the new student campus that will feed the university, medical facilities for the local catchment. Green becomes a regeneration source of new life. In general, green areas have always been conceived as a need for builders to give something back to the city after building developments. In this case the difference is striking: we start from the park to build architecture around it. And at the centre of the project lie people's needs



Above. Milano Future city – San Babila via Padova axis Research commissioned by Volvo: 10 centre-periphery axis projects, 2019. On top. NYC Boulevard & Broadway, Slow city planning, 2009 ; Metrogramma with ETH Zurigo, Politecnico di Torino, Università Federico II di Napoli.



# LE GRAND BLEU

*Symbol of calm and balance, it is a timeless shade that expresses the desire for stability and sober elegance. Associated with the idea of purification, it recalls the depth of the oceans and the evening sky, inviting reflection and promoting resilience*

## Stage Designs

Texturae draws its inspiration from contemporary art, a wallpaper brand born in 2016 in Reggio Calabria (Italy). A design conceived to create spaces with a strong visual impact. Curves, designed by Costance Guisset, is a jungle of lines that gives life to solid, soft and enveloping shapes. > [texturae.it](https://www.texturae.it)



## Pure Relax

Produced to perfect standards by the hourglass expert Pols Potten this contemporary hourglass contains sand coloured with the original signature Conran Blue Hue.  
> [www.conranshop.co.uk](https://www.conranshop.co.uk)



The Colour of the Year

Pantone 19-4052 Classic Blue is elegant in its simplicity. Evoking the sky at dusk, the reassuring qualities of this stimulating color highlight our desire for a stable base from which to start as we prepare to cross the threshold of a new era.

> [www.pantone.com](http://www.pantone.com)







### Contemporary Etruria

Contemporary Etruscan bucchero - lathe-shaped vase in high temperature stoneware ceramic decorated with blue engobe and sgraffito technique. Jacopo Lupi e Sonia Pasquinelli, 2020.

> [jacopolupi.com](http://jacopolupi.com) | [claraholt.com](http://claraholt.com)



### Ocean Waves trapped in Architecture

In order to offer the world a new experience, Wave with anamorphic illusion has been successfully revealed on the largest & high-definition outdoor advertising screen in South Korea at 80.1m (w) x 20.1M (h) designed by d'strict.

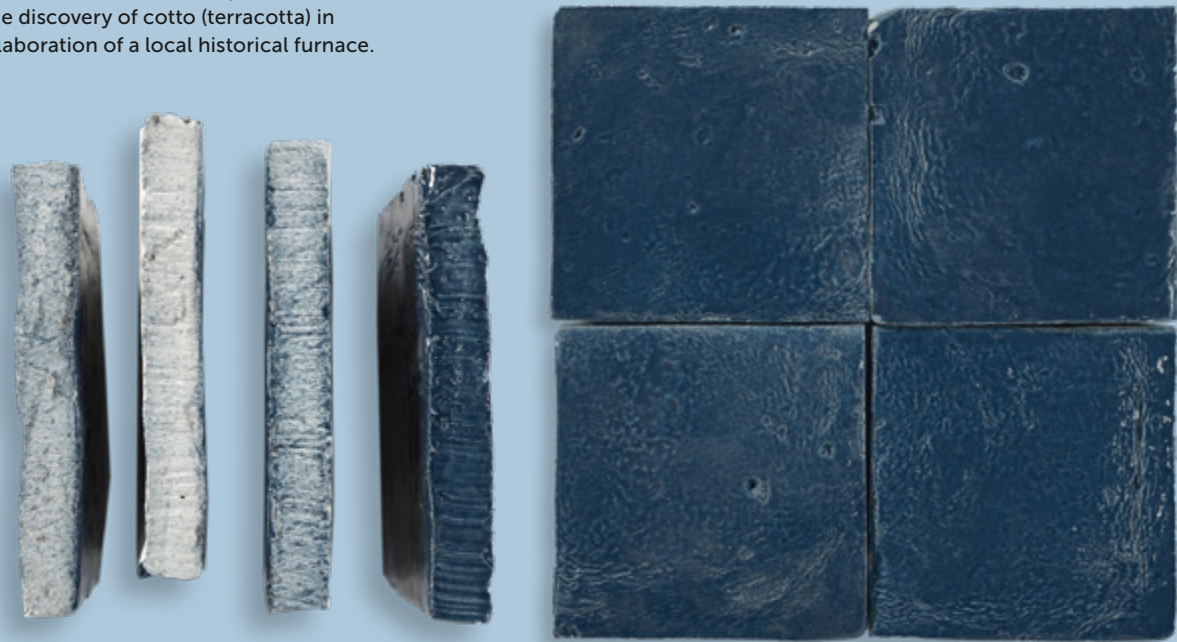
> [www.dstrict.com/kr/](http://www.dstrict.com/kr/)



### The Color of the Sapphire

The Cotto Smaltato (enameled terracotta) refers to the traditional containers of wine and oil, which were enameled internally both to avoid the absorption of liquid by the material and the transmission of the flavor by the latter. FangoRosa begins the discovery of cotto (terracotta) in Umbria, with the collaboration of a local historical furnace.

> [fangorosa.com](http://fangorosa.com)



### A Touch of Vintage

From the Rimini Blu series, Aldo Londi's Horse Head designed in 1949 and now re-edited upon order. Made by casting in white earth, the decoration is performed with manual stencil engraving and different motifs on the fresh clay.

> [www.bitossiceramiche.it](http://www.bitossiceramiche.it)







### A Powder Blue Design

Ipalys powder finish.

A range of washbasins, made possible through Diamatec® technology and characterized by sensual and extra thin lines, that make them unique in their simplicity. Different shapes combined with a revisited colour palette harking back to Ideal Standard's historical shades. A bold combination of craft & innovation pushing the boundaries of interior design.



### Pure Shapes

Designed by Nicholai Wiigh Hansen, the Strøm collection is inspired by early 20th-century cubism. The outcome is a refined simplicity of geometric shapes and colours translated into functional everyday objects.

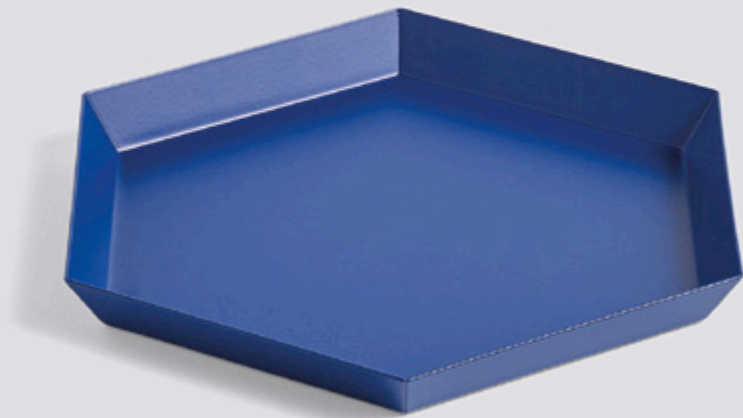
> [raawii.dk](http://raawii.dk)



Geometrical Order

Designer Clara von Zweigbergk's graphic training is clearly visible in the Kaleido collection designed for Hay. The series of modular trays in colored steel allows the creation of infinite constellations.

>[hay.dk/i](http://hay.dk/i)



Super Glamour

This dark blue drink bottle is an ode to the Great Pacific: our planet's largest and most impenetrable ocean. By purchasing this Pacific Blue Doppler, you are contributing to cleaner oceans. Available in three different shades of blue.

>[shop.dopper.com/original](http://shop.dopper.com/original)



Everblue

Delft pottery, also known as Delft Blue, is a general term now used for Dutch tin-glazed earthenware, a kind of faience. The start of the style was around 1600, but Delftware continues to be produced. Picture: Bowl 21 Floreal.

>[www.thedelftbluefactory.com](http://www.thedelftbluefactory.com)



Blue Horizon

This blown and hand-crafted vase designed by Carlo Scarpa in 1940 bears the signature of one of the great masters of the 1900s. 26 cm high, 23.5 cm in diameter and 2 kilos weight.

>[www.venini.com](http://www.venini.com)



Evening Pyjamas

"Luxury must be comfortable, otherwise it's not luxury" said Coco Chanel. Since 2011, Olivia von Halle has been interpreting this statement at its best by designing refined pyjamas in 100% 19-Momme silk. In the picture: Coco Navy Silk Pajama.

>[www.oliviavonhalle.com](http://www.oliviavonhalle.com)



Indigo Linen

For more than twenty years Harmony, Créateur d'Intérieurs has been making home textile collections. The Java bathroom set is made of 100% linen. Available in different colors.

>[www.harmony-textile.com](http://www.harmony-textile.com)



Mediterranean Echoes

Each environment has its own scent, which remains fixed in our mind like that of the people we have met. To light a candle is to awaken the memory to recreate enveloping sensations. The Onno collections are all presented in glass containers. In photo: Royal Blue Candle Ginger and ficus.

>[www.onnocollection.com](http://www.onnocollection.com)



Timeless Charm

Patented in 1928 by Fritz Beindorff owner of Pelikan, Herzstück 1929 immediately became a cult object. Today Pelikan Special Edition Classic M120 Iconic Blu celebrates its history.

>[www.pelikan.com](http://www.pelikan.com)



Diva Eyewear

Kuboraum designs face masks, which strengthens the character of those who wear them. All the collections by the Italian duo are designed in Berlin and produced in Italy. Pictured: Mask V1 Royal Blue.

>[www.kuboraum.com](http://www.kuboraum.com)



In Mask

Reimiro, Italian startup born during the lockdown, takes its name from a crescent-shaped ornament once worn by the people of Easter Island. Mash is its first project: a recycled cotton mask to be worn with the OE-KO-TEX filter included in the package.

>[reimiro.com](http://reimiro.com)





# A strong sense of *innovation* and *craft*

*With more than 200 years of history and 1.5 million pieces produced every year for the healthcare, residential and contract sectors, the British philosophy of Ideal Standard is based on dynamism, research and dialogue*



**The health sector is the strength of the British brand. For years, there have been numerous collaborations with leading medical professionals in infection control to ensure compliance with market regulations**

A ceramic basin, a solid surface counter-top in resistant material and a single touch pressure tap. This is the mobile station for frequent hand washing that Armitage Shanks, part of the Ideal Standard Group, has promptly developed to ensure greater hygiene in times of a pandemic.

It can be installed anywhere: on construction sites, outside restaurants, parks, shopping centre entrances. Behind this simple project - easy to install, but effective in its use - hides more than one side of Ideal Standard UK: innovative, pragmatic, functional, flexible. Always careful to interpret people's needs.

“Variety is the spice of life”, they say in the company, “it makes work dynamic and allows us to explore different fields”. There is the healthcare sector, excelling in the world of sanitary ware and tap production for the medical field, the research and technology division dedicated to studying increasingly sophisticated and cutting-edge systems.

Then we find the design area flanked by prestigious national and international brands. Suffice to give a quick glance at the catalogues, the website and the many activities of the London showroom in order to confirm these statements.

Ideal Standard's contribution to the icons of the London skyline includes the Leadenhall washbasins, designed by the architectural firm Rogers Stirk Harbor + Partners, that furnish the toilets of the archetypal skyscraper in the heart of London. Equally iconic, Markwik 21 and Contour 21, respectively a tap and a basin, were designed in co-operation with scientists and health specialists to reduce the spread of bacteria and provide an effective solution for hospitals and medical centres. The AquaBlade technology, thanks to the elimination of the rim, guarantees 100% cleaning of the toilet, becoming a valid ally for the safety and hygiene of public as well as private toilets.

It is said that the strength of a brand often has deep and branching roots. Going back to those of Ideal Standard UK, we get to 1817, the year of foundation of Armitage Shanks, the iconic British sanitary ware brand, acquired in 1999 by



**On the opposite page.** The sites where Ideal Standard's business is developed in Great Britain: Armitage, headquarters of the company of the same name acquired by IS in 1999; Hull commercial headquarters and London where the showroom is active.

**Above.** A glimpse of the showroom in Clerkenwell: exhibitions, conferences and debates on contemporary living are organized here



Ideal Standard international with headquarters in Belgium. It is based in Staffordshire, precisely in Armitage, the village which was indeed named after the company, having been constructed around the factory to initially house the workers. Armitage Shanks chose this location because of the road infrastructure and waterways, that supported the factory and enabled it to be built during the industrial revolution. Today, more than 200 years after the first collections, it is still the national leader producing 1.5 million pieces per year for schools, offices, hotels and private residences, hospitals.

The brand's advantage is also a sophisticated barcode system (SKU - Stock Keeping Unit) that records the history of each piece produced from manufacture to installation. The Armitage production site is joined by the commercial site of Hull in Yorkshire and the

London Design and Specification Centre in the Clerkenwell district. Here, in this trendy area in the heart of London, where creative companies and elegant apartments have taken the place of factories and industrial warehouses, solutions are specified through the centre and expertise and support provided to our customers, while the Ideal Standard philosophy expands and develops. The strength of Ideal Standard UK is in the level of expertise that is brought to any project large or small, residential or commercial.

The desire to develop expertise and drive the market forward is a constant motivator for the business, whether that is understanding and developing new construction methods to maximise efficiencies in offsite build or to work with fast growing online partners to enable and develop a virtual decision making process, for a 203 year old company they are truly young at heart.

760	5,5 <sup>k</sup>	100	150	1,5 <sup>mil</sup>
of employees	SKUs sold in the UK	projects tracked and managed by our residential team on a daily basis	projects tracked and managed by our specification team on a daily basis	million of pieces of ceramic cast at our Armitage factory every year



Above. Covering 4,000 square feet, over four floors, the London showroom has been created to bring architects and designers together to experience the group's evolving family of design-driven products. Visitors benefit from the insight and skills of our in-house design team, who are able to offer practical advice on the planning and designing of bathrooms for a vast range of projects including hotels, offices, hospitals and residential properties.



## An interview with Katie Cope, Marketing Director of Ideal Standard UK & Ireland

**How would you define the DNA of Ideal Standard in the UK? What makes it unique?**

As a total company we are really quite unique in the UK washroom & bathroom market, being the only company that serves every inch of the market from technically advanced clinical solutions for Hospitals to beautiful residential bathrooms at the leading edge of aesthetic design with our Atelier Collections. A strong sense of craft & heritage runs through our veins. We are the last large-scale

manufacturer in the UK, moulding & firing clay every day to create two of the most recognised bathroom brands - Ideal Standard and Armitage Shanks. With over 200 years of history, comes a cool authenticity and years of construction design experience that we are fiercely proud of. We have a strong team, particularly skilled in understanding and supporting the specification process, working with our customers to realise their projects large and small.

**Which key areas and sectors (innovation, design, healthcare, projects, customer service, to name a few) you believe are the most important to be strengthened today in the UK business?**

Customers are not just looking to buy product, they want a great experience in doing so too.

203	124	3,500	2	1
years old Armitage Shanks founded in 1817	years old. Ideal Standard founded in 1896	customer service calls taken weekly	companies brought together in 1999	London Showroom. The London Design and Specification Centre address is: 76-78 Clerkenwell Road



Above. The Shard, tallest building in the UK and true landmark on the London skyline. Ideal Standard products were developed specifically for this project.



Alongside. The Bishopsgate under-counter basin is ideally suited for use with Sensorflow 21 deck mounted spouts and the Contour 21 soap dispenser.



Whether a consumer or a professional buyer, high service levels are a way of life. You expect products to be available when and where you need them and you expect the interactions with the brand you choose to be confident and fill you with an excitement or a reassurance that you have made the right choice. This is something that we can never stop pushing on and developing, it goes hand in hand with the beautiful design and technical quality of our products to create an experience that people choose over others.

Over the past year, we have been undertaking a large operational design and CRM project in the UK named ‘Project Flywheel’, designed to create a more agile and customer centric business. Core to this activity is the implementation of Salesforce, a new CRM system. The system is a major investment for the group, which enables us to offer a more consistent and dedicated service by customer. Instead of teams being split by enquiry type, which can often result in customers potentially speaking with up to three different people on one call, teams are now split by customer, so most things can be handled in one call with one contact. This is a real step change in our processes, which will make

us an even better company to work with. You also can’t ignore the accelerated trends as a result of the global pandemic that we are all experiencing. Hygiene is high on the agenda and will remain so. Touchfree and Speech Driven technologies were already growing trends, as clearly identified in a whitepaper we developed last year “Creating better washrooms”. The importance of these technologies have only been further emphasised by events of recent months. As a business this is an area in which we have significant experience and with new product introductions like Intellimix, a touchfree tap solution which delivers both water and soap, we are able to deliver an exceptional hygienic experience building on our already strong track record in this area of technology.

**In this pandemic (and post-pandemic) times, which are the key actions planned for the near future?**

Ideal Standard’s Design Collection - Atelier, created in collaboration with Palomba Serafini Associati - will be launched in the UK this year. The launch will really elevate the Ideal Standard brand and inspire the design community.

**The UK has the most active internet users across Europe. As a business, this is a key area of investment both to inspire and influence the market**

The partnership draws on our strong design heritage and takes previous iconic products. The range is on display in our Design and Specification Centre in Clerkenwell, London, with fantastic window visuals in the heart of the A & D community.

The UK has the most active internet users across Europe, a feature of the way we live and work that the pandemic and lockdown period has accelerated, meaning online shopping and different services have seen an even stronger adoption rate. As a UK business, this is a key area of investment both to inspire and influence when a customer is researching their purchase and to transact a sale on or offline.

Specification is also always at the centre of activities in the UK and this will not change, we aim to continually improve the services we provide, reducing estimating time, offering excellent design and digital support as well as developing new solutions for the changing demands of construction like the increased use of modern methods of construction in the new build and high rise arenas. With components

being manufactured and assembled in factories, they arrive onsite ready for installation, resulting in fewer skilled trades being needed onsite, greater capacity and reduced costs.

Throughout the pandemic, the UK business continued to be very active, our teams showed great agility and inventiveness, delivering solutions for the NHS (National Health Service) in the UK, to support the existing hospital estates and the pop-up healthcare solutions including the 9000 bed Nightingale hospitals. We are hugely proud of how we have been able to contribute to fighting COVID-19. As a team, we have experienced lots of different adversity over the years and without question we are always strong and pull together - truly together for better.

**Looking ahead, what is your general vision for the future of Ideal Standard UK?**

A company re-connecting to its roots of design and expertise to create a new generation of solutions that consumers desire in their homes and professionals depend upon to make their project a success. It’s an exciting future, one that the UK team is fully focused on realising 🇬🇧

**Hygienic innovation and bacterial prevention. Details that make the difference**

A recent report by the UK House of Commons on "Reducing Health Care Infections in Hospitals in England" found that 300,000 people contract an infection each year after a hospital visit, while the International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene (IFH) states that sanitary areas are breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses. From this starting point Armitage Shanks has developed the Markwik 21+ faucet and the Contour 21+ washbasin.

**Markwik 21+ and Contour 21+ Clinical Solutions**

Markwik 21+ and Contour 21+ address pooling and water stagnation, reducing splashing and the amount of static water in the system, working with materials that limit the opportunity for bacteria to feed, and also providing a flexible maintenance system for cleansing fixtures and fittings.

Markwik 21+ has two thermal rinse functions allowing for manual hot water cleaning, along with an automatic version, which ensures the electronic fittings used irregularly are washed every 24hrs. A "hydro-purge" system flushes water through the full system, ensuring this is debris free after installation. The detachable spouts and body components allow for complete immersion and disinfection. The Contour 21+ ceramics range works perfectly in combination with the fittings. Avoiding splashing and the amount of static water in the system, thus limiting the possibility of feeding bacteria. The range includes integrated SmartGuard+ antimicrobial technology, an ultra-smooth glaze that makes it more difficult for bacteria to cling to the surface. The Contour 21+ basin ensures instant, vertical water drainage thanks to a smooth pipe system, with no steps or suspension points.

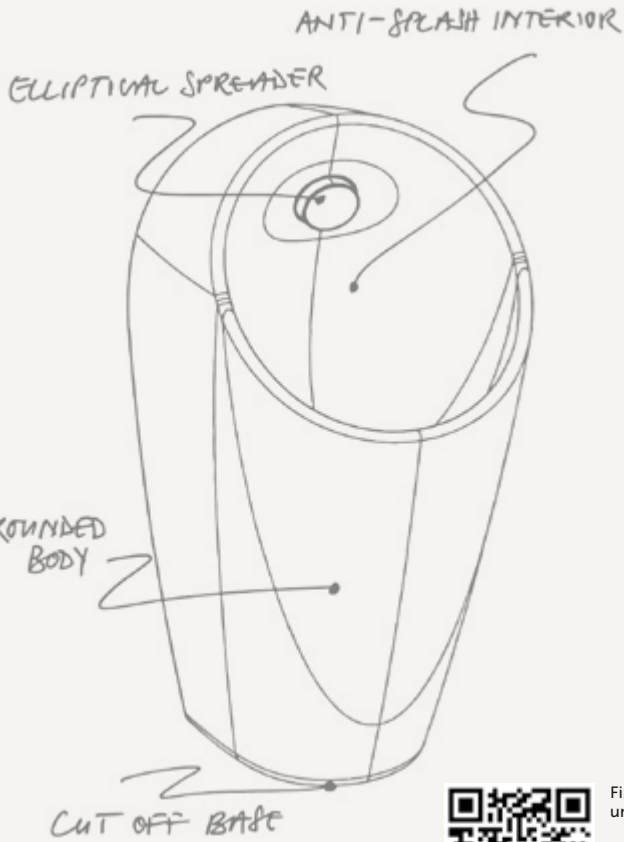


Scan and discover how Markwik21+ taps help creating safer environments and preventing bacterial infections.

**Sphero**

The elegant and comprehensive Sphero urinal range has been designed with features which allow for greater levels of cleanliness, easier installation and maintenance, as well as water saving benefits for all commercial spaces.

The range comprises of three different sized urinals, Mini, Midi and Maxi, with multiple installation options, all which complement the modern washroom. The electronic Maxi e-hybrid model has built in smart technology which detects levels of salinity, optimising the water usage by adjusting flushing according to usage. Another key feature of the electronic models is the innovative spreader light which senses blockages and other maintenance issues. Sphero’s unique circular concave shape has been designed to minimise splashing while also improving durability and efficiency of the urinals. The new rimless design adheres to contemporary trends, as well as helping to retain liquids within the bowl, aiding hygiene and cleaning regimes. Easy to specify, the Sphero range comes with all the key components expected from a urinal, under one product code. Its pioneering spreader nozzle delivers a hygienic flush which covers most of the urinal bowl. The top fixed waste feature allows for quick and easy access when using the supplied service key, making for effortless on-wall maintenance.



Find out more about Sphero's unique features in this video.



*A world tour through soaps.  
Handcrafted, with exotic  
scents or floral fragrances.  
Discovering traditions,  
ancient customs and  
exclusive productions.  
To transform a habit  
into a sensual ritual*

# HAND

Soap making has existed in many different cultures for a long time, even Romans and ancient Egyptians used to make it. It is traditionally produced with fat, lye and water, which are transformed into soap thanks to a byproduct of natural glycerine. In the beginning, a lot of animal fat was used and is still used in industrial soap. Later people started making soap from Olive oil in the countries that had a lot of olive trees like Turkey, Greece and also France. It has to be borne in mind that the ingredients should be ethically sourced and well produced. A world tour through soaps. Handcrafted, with exotic scents or floral fragrances. Discovering traditions, ancient customs and exclusive productions. To transform a habit into a sensual ritual

## Ideal Standard

Iom and Connect  
soap-dishes



## D.R. Harri's & Co.

### Arlington Soap, a classic touch

D. R. Harris's Arlington Soap is one of the company's most enduringly classic products. Arlington has been in production for well over 100 years and is a classic Eau de Cologne fragrance with strong citrus notes of lemon and orange blossom underpinned by the warmth of musk and rose. D. R. Harris soaps are made in the UK.

> <https://www.drharris.co.uk>



Ozalee

Amarok soap made by hand, in the south of France

Rich in olive oil and activated charcoal, AMAROK is suitable for a gentle daily cleansing of the body, face, hair and beard. Tonic, its natural scent made from organic eucalyptus and rosemary essential oils.

> [www.ozalee.fr](http://www.ozalee.fr)

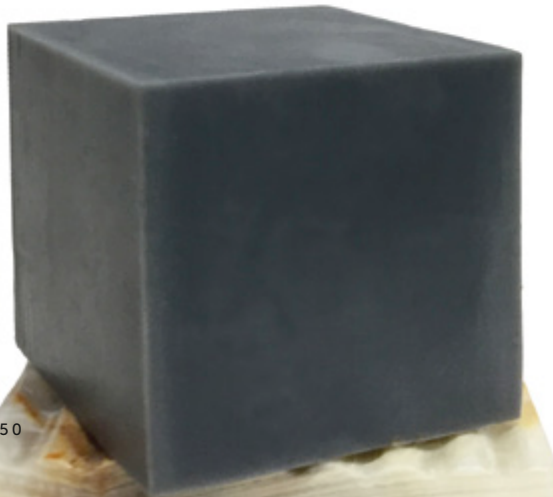


Binu Binu

Big Block Shaman

For the soap-lover who doesn't want to run out. A super-sized block of our super-natural cold-pressed soap. Contains detoxifying activated charcoal bolstered with essential oils of Lavender, Himalayan Cedarwood and Clary Sage which form the basis of many purification ceremonies.

> <https://www.binu-binu.com>



Amouage

InterMan Soap

Inspired by chaos and disorder this spicy and woody fragrance masquerades an interlude moment of harmony in its heart. This gently fragranced soap incorporates natural vegetable oils to maintain well-balanced healthy skin.

> [www.amouage.com](http://www.amouage.com)



Frama

Apothecary  
Created with natural and organic ingredients

The mild Apothecary Hand Wash has been created with Frama's signature scent, providing a naturally fresh and aromatic cleansing experience that refreshes and softens the hands. Made in Denmark. It comes in two sizes and is bottled in custom colored Italian glass bottles.

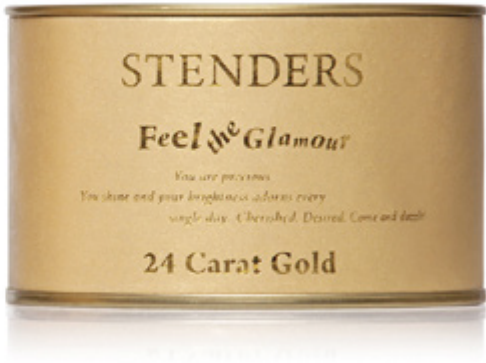


Vielo

Organic Hand Wash

Nourishing organic hand wash, specially designed to cleanse dry and sensitive hands gently. Created with organic whey (nourishing), soy protein (strengthening) and organic extracts of lavender (soothing), nettle (antioxidant) and rosemary (stimulating).

> <https://www.vieloe.com>



Stenders

24 Carat Gold soap - Your skin will be toned and silky smooth!

The exclusive Gold Soap will bring celebration atmosphere in your bathroom. In Ancient Egypt the beautiful wives of pharaohs used partly ground gold for cosmetic procedures. Extract of pomegranates grown in Southern sun is a rich source of antioxidants supplementing the effect of the soap perfectly.

> <https://www.stenders-cosmetics.com>

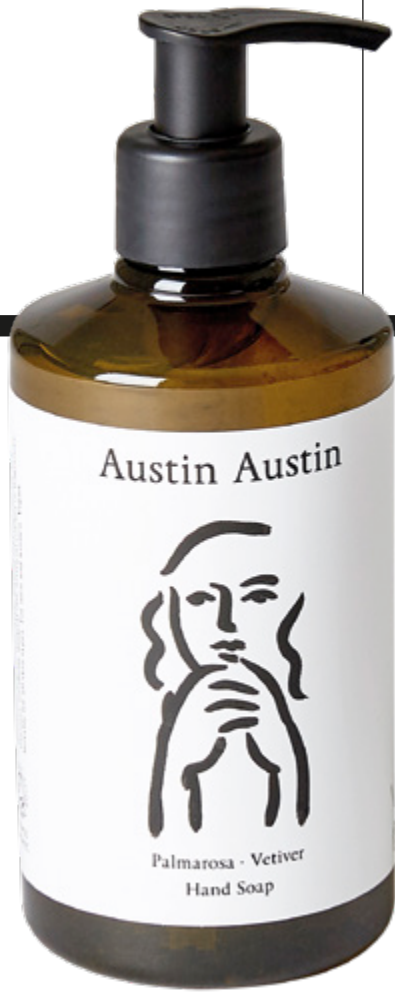


Barwa

Black Orchid  
0% ingredients of animal origin

The Black Orchid soap is formulated with a recipe which dates back to 1949. The plant base of this soap is enriched with highly nourishing Shea butter, which provides a very gentle care for the facial and body skin. The key ingredient is a rejuvenating complex of 5 natural oils of coconut, Buriti, olives, avocado, and grapes to moisturise and protect the skin from dryness and ageing. The voluptuous note of black orchid makes it very pleasant to cleanse the skin of the body and the face of make-up and everyday impurities.

> <https://www.barwa.com.pl>



Austin Austin

Palmarosa & Vetiver Hand Soap

This hand soap is made without GM ingredients, SLS, silicones, parabens, mineral oils, artificial colours or fragrances and is certified Organic and vegan. Made with extracts of plants, grasses, seaweed and algae to moisturise and protect.

> <https://austinaustinorganic.com>

Savonneries Bruxelloises

Amaranth and Almond oil - The feminine seduction ...

From the deep transparency of this heady soap, to the oriental notes caressed of citrus fruits and candied red fruits, a journey into sensuality and trouble. Its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties help prevent skin allergies. To discover absolutely.

> <https://www.savonneriesbruxelloises.com>





# From *rituals* to the forms of *design*

*Everything starts from water: holy, purifying, precious, and from the need to collect it and offer it to believers.*

*Today this vital element, considered the gold of the 21st century, is part of our daily life. Design has put it on stage by designing washbasins with a strong personality, functional and elegant.*

*Real furnishings to put on display*



Basilica of San Gennaro in Antignano (Neaples)  
Holy water column font.



Asymmetry game, *Conca*, round vessel with free-standing pedestal and basin unit  
Joy vessel mixer.

The washbasin has a perfect, simple and generous shape. Cozy. Originally it was used for ablutions, ritual washings for spiritual purification and was set in the atrium of basilicas. The Italian Renaissance produced fonts of rare beauty, true art masterpieces. Just think of the sinks of the sacristies of Florence Cathedral, the majolica one by Giovanni della

Today the purest geometries define the bathroom. Washbasins, as holy water stoups for contemporary rituals, are once again essential basins

Robbia in Santa Maria Novella and the huge basin of the Certosa di Pavia. Carved in marble or other precious materials, they welcomed believers and in return they asked for a gesture of faith. However, already in the Middle Ages, portable washbasins, shaped like basins, were used to rinse the hands during meals: sophisticated gold, silver or bronze vessels from Persian, Sassanid, Muslim art in general. Even French, Flemish and German artists from the thirteenth century tried their hand at the creation of aquamanili of the highest craftsmanship. The same form, practical and

simplified, is found later in private homes: small sinks to hang on the wall in copper, porcelain or majolica. But it is in the eighteenth century that the washbasin began to be a more widespread and permanent object: supported by three crossed feet, it was placed in the corners of halls and bedrooms. Then, in the nineteenth century, we found them locked in closets, a clear way to hide the intimacy linked to the act of washing. Since then, also thanks to the increasing urbanization, the desire for personal hygiene has conquered a defined space: first as an appendix to the house, then by occupying a whole room inside the most exclusive homes. Today, after years of segregation and, we dare say, fighting a real social and image revolution, the bathroom, complete with all its elements, is universally considered the place of well-being: a space to live in intimacy, but also to share with loved ones.

Ideal Standard has been the spokesperson of this revolution since the 1950s, forever changing the concept of the bathroom and creating the first example of industrial design in this sector. It also sets new aesthetic standards - an interface of rituals in post-war Europe -, which accompanies mass urbanization and helps shape



Reminiscent of the basins of the past, *Ipalyss* round vessel, with an essential shape and light profiles. Here combined with the Connect Air mixer.



Syria, bronze basin, 1320-40 ca, Muhammad Ibn Al-Zayn.





Strada vessel: built to be flexible and beautiful.



Strada II round basins - Adapto consoles.  
Its generous width adds character to this piece of furniture of great elegance. Edge vessel mixers.



modernity. Since then, the Ideal Standard catalogue has been enriched with designs and new technologies, which allow for very light, almost immaterial, yet extremely resistant aesthetics. Today the purest geometries define the bathroom. Washbasins, as holy water stoups for contemporary rituals, are once again essential basins, objects to put on display. They can be placed on large shelves, supported by tapered columns or recessed under stone slabs or precious woods. They have variable

shapes: perfect rounds, slender ovals, squared basins with rounded corners. They are available in technologically advanced materials and can come in a thousand different finishes and colors. The washbasin is a real piece of design, studied in its most sophisticated ergonomic functions to be exhibited as a special piece of furniture. Top designers sign the collections after carefully studying gestures and habits to design bathroom fixtures of extreme beauty and formal rigor



**Strada II** features oval-shaped basins, perfect for resting on natural wood shelves. A refined idea for sharing moments of well-being. On the wall Edge mixers.



Large square-shaped washbasin, **Connect Air** square basin underlines its great formal balance when combined with Connect Air wall mounted mixer.





Ipalys basin in Mink finish, combined with Joy tap.



Connect Air is designed to be built-in. Here it is shown in combination with a suspended cabinet and a drawer from the same collection.



# Lifestyle chemistry

*Natural materials, very pure oils and an artist's touch. Liza Witte draws on the history of the earliest perfume bottles from the beginning of the 19th century when fragrances were kept in flacons designe bearing the signature of René Lalique and Emile Gallé. Today, she signs soap collections exhibited in museums throughout Europe.*

Each perfume has a story to tell. It speaks of encounters, memory, bodies, travels and of emotions. "Nothing is more memorable than a smell" wrote the English poet Diane Ackerman. "A perfume can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting and yet evoke a summer of our childhood on a mountain lake". A fragrance is an alchemy.

Whoever designs must have a perfect knowledge of plants and chemistry, but also of the olfactory reactions on the skin, the persistence of a smell in an environment. A perfume designer should be able to identify desires by interpreting the characters of the people who often express themselves through the fragrance they wear. Liza Witte defines herself as an artist and perfumer. We are meeting her in Amsterdam where she relocated from a small village in Germany.



The Silhouette Collection presented under glass domes. Soaps to display, to use daily or to perfume rooms.



Liza Witte in her Amsterdam laboratory.



**What is your story/background?**

At the beginning of my life, I was a dancer: a career I had to give up because of an injury, which took me back from where I was coming. That is why I went back to what I had always

been doing ever since I can remember, making things with my own hands. I was born and raised in a small village in Germany, surrounded by woods and countryside. My grandparents used to have amazing gardens

and did everything by themselves, seeding, harvesting and caring. I developed an obsession for the detail, which I have transferred

on to the research of materials. I am really obsessed with materials, their textures and their multi-faceted variations. Ten years ago, inspired by the perfume flacons by Gallé and Lalique, I had the idea of creating the Silhouette Collection. From that moment on, perfumes have become my material and my storyboard. I didn't mean to setup a brand, although it somehow happened: I became hooked on soap production, I gave up buying them and started making them myself. I had lots of oils and essential oils. So first I started producing soap for myself, then for my friends, and today for all the soap lovers.

**When did you discover the soap world?**

My first artist's life was that of a dancer. I had to shower at least twice a day, before and after work, and always got dry skin, rashes, and red spots from the ordinary soap or shower gels and was obliged to use a lot of body milk. I never liked plastic bottles, let alone in my bathroom, and wanted to avoid using it. I even removed the

labels to have a more minimalistic impact. Then I discovered some really good natural soaps and started collecting them in my travels - mainly Mediterranean or Aleppo soaps. I liked their scents, their colors and realised that they did not give me any rashes. I kind of got a bit obsessed with collecting nice soap bars. So, my Silhouette Collection is the result of these experiences. Moreover, I think these days it is really crucial to avoid plastic packaging as much as possible. So, soap and shampoo bars are a good solution also for the environment because they can be packed simply in paper, they travel light and disappear without a trace after using them.

**In your opinion what's the relation with Fashion, Interior Design, Art, perfume and soap making?**

For me everything revolves around material and its texture and it's vital that each product should have a soul or a specific character. The secret lies in creating with a personal touch.

Texture, movement, duration, and storytelling, as I experienced as a dancer, are the necessary ingredients to create something. My past experiences have turned into products that radiate, embody and improve our daily life. They tell stories that with time become unique, linked to specific moments of our personal life. And eventually they disappear. I have often collaborated with other artists and designers to create specific installations and performances. In this case, it is imperative to design fragrances or objects that can cross the boundaries between people, between people and space and between people and objects. I am still dealing with performances. My latest one focuses on memory: I stage the recollection of the scent of a person who has long gone.

**How do you make a fragrance?**

I start by selecting the ingredients – raw, authentic, imperfect or unusual, but always of great quality. They must also have another requisite: to be





simple. Imagine something that you can look at for a long time without getting bored or telling a story keeping the listeners' interest alive and flowing from the beginning till the end. The same should happen with my soaps. I focus on the quality of the materials because they must accompany people without becoming unpleasant or cloying. Perfumes, body oils, room fragrances and soaps - all unisex – represent my sphere of action. I love it when people share their scents. Another issue, strickly connected with fragrance selection, is time. My work demands patience, because everything is handmade, and I produce everything in small quantities. The Silhouette Collection, for example, is actually made on order and takes two weeks to be delivered.

**What is the difference between your various collections?**

They are all niche fragrances. My soaps contain several botanical notes from essential oils. But not only that, I also I add extracts, macerates, clays, herbs, milk or natural color

such as charcoal that acts as a detergent. I do not use artificial colours, additives, preservatives and the like. My creations are something between botanical and floral, however they are all marked by a fine fragrance.

**How was it born?**

I usually work with double or layered meanings. I like that things are not as they appear and that, thanks to the contrast of materials, perceptions change. My Silhouette Collection can be compared to an ephemeral landscape of solid scent, where flacons that appear to be made of glass or cast-iron, in reality are fragile, soft and ephemeral. I wanted to create an object for the senses, a visual, olfactory, and tactile experience, something useful and recyclable at the same time: in this case the object vanishes without a trace after you use it. I was looking for form and content. The Silhouette Collection flacons are not copies, but a homage to the bottles of past times. Even in the choice of the colour lies a precise meaning: black is for me the reduction to the essential and it's perfect to create icons.

Silhouette also means shadow, while “perfume” means “through smoke”. It’s a series of five perfume bottles sculptured in black soap. For each bottle, there is an individual fragrance. And each flacon, just like a sculpture to put on display, serves also both as a room fragrance and a nourishing body soap.

**What about your Silhouette Collection's performance?**

The whole collection revolves around the concept of ephemerality. For an exhibition set up at a museum in Bern I created a melting device hidden in a neat column. The idea was to melt several collections of Silhouettes live, so that they released their scent in the space and showed all their fluidity: turning an object from solid to liquid. This created a black landscape of scent that looked like ships sinking in black water.

**What about your next projects?**

I am working on two new perfumes and also on an an incense project. In addition to this, I am

also trying my hand on black ceramics, that you will soon find on my website.

**How long does a soap fragrance last?**

It can last several months, it all depends on how it is kept. A flacon of the Silhouette Collection kept in its glass dome will keep its scent for years. With time, though, the outer part will turn thicker and the perfume will only remain inside the bottle. However, if you decide to use the soap, even after several years it will still give you a very scented shower experience.

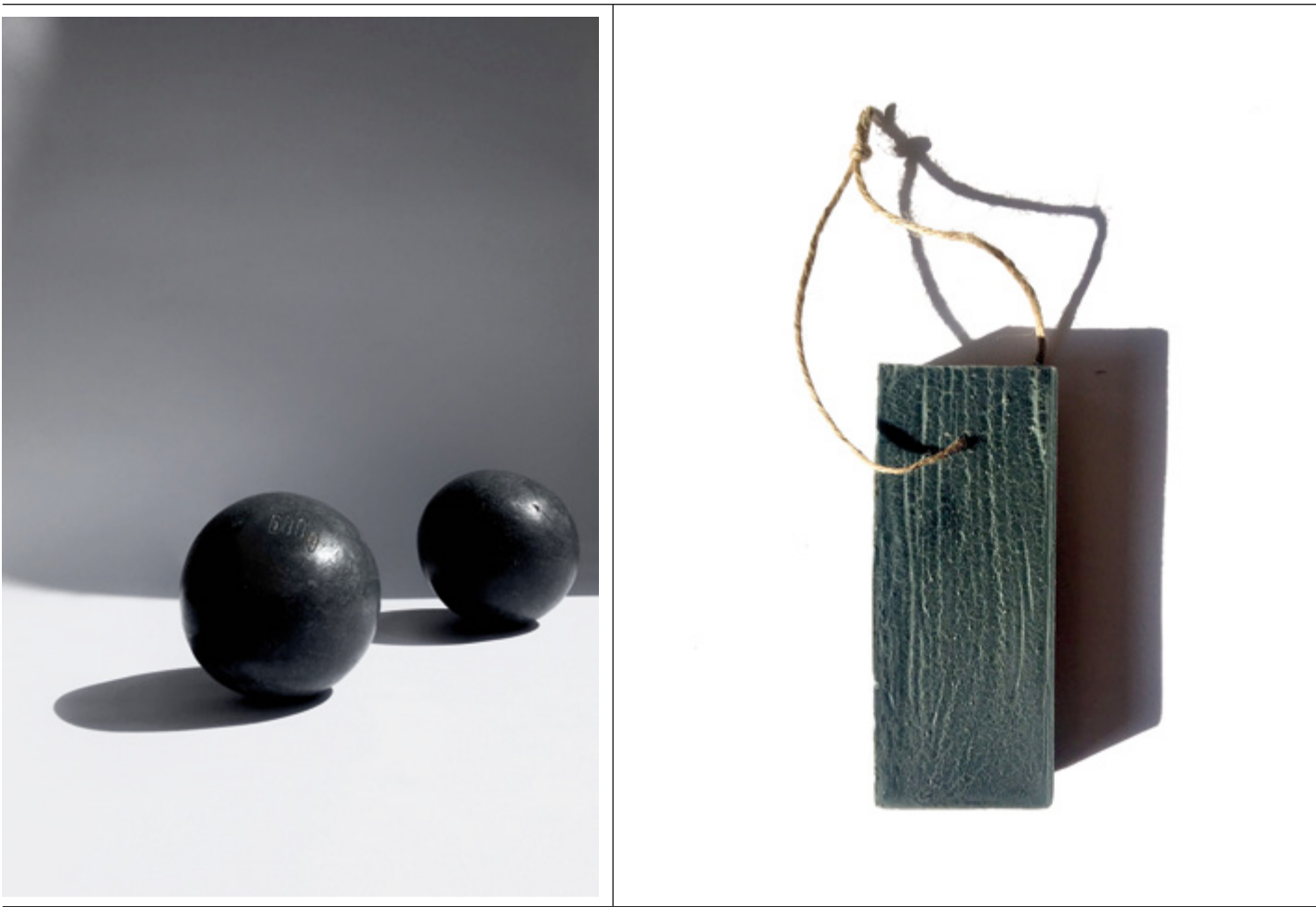
**What are you best-selling fragrances?**

In general, people love Cardamom, Burnt Milk and Green Patchouli body oil. Italians favour Neroli. Among my handmade soaps the best “hits” are Rhazul, Vetiver Mint, and Opatcho. In any case the choice of a fragrance is something personal 🌿



A few essential oils created by Lize Witte. Above: Jux, Handmade Fragrance Übermut. On the left: Neroli Body oil, A juicy elixir, happy, fresh and fragrant; Timber, A deep and mature scent of cedar and gujak wood with warm amber and slightly smoky tones.

Above: Coffee scented soap scrub. All the labels are hand-written.



Opatcho Canon Ball Soap. The bomb: 600 gr of Orange and Patchouli scented soap.

Black Opatcho soap. It is produced in small batches, according to the traditional cold process method and does not contain any preservatives, parabens, artificial colors or any animal products.





Design: Robin Levien — Photo: Carlo William Rossi + Fabio Mureddu — AD: ps+a

  
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