



Furniture

By Oleg Klodt and Anna Agapova
Founders, O&A London

O&A London is the brain-child of Oleg Klodt and Anna Agapova. A brand devised to focus on the very finest details and combine time-honoured and pioneering methods and materials. O&A London is renowned for producing one-off pieces that harmonise effortlessly within their settings. Oleg Klodt launched his architectural practice, Oleg Klodt Architecture & Design, shortly after he graduated from the Moscow Architectural Institute. Oleg Klodt creates classic interiors, characterised by their elegance, and fashioned with innate intelligence. Anna Agapova is a Partner at Oleg Klodt Architecture & Design, and head of the design department at the studio. Anna, born into a family of civil engineers, began her journey into the world of architecture with lighting. She studied urban development at Moscow State University, where she looked at issues of the electrification of cities, with special studies in the field of lighting. Here, Anna and Oleg combine their love of furniture, as seen at O&A London, to discuss the changing face of furniture design.

The British furniture landscape is diverse, and it is experiencing a renaissance. Every year we see new names and emerging brands that are hard to categorise under one particular style. Our experience in interior design stretches back more than fifteen years, evolving more and more in the luxury segment of the market. Most of our clients hear about us through the grapevine and many of them know each other. On the one hand, this means our clients trust us and respect our experience, but on the other, no one wants the same furnishings as their friends. That requires us to have a thoughtful approach to the whole creative process, including the sourcing and designing of furniture.



Above: Meissa, designed by O&A London

The manifesto of our company is to create interiors that will always remain modern and relevant. Any interior needs a kind of suppleness, a soft feeling that arises from a mixture of different items, which all have different stylistic approaches. There shouldn't be a feeling of completion, instead, a sense that you could always add something else later. The interior works as a foundation, thus, our primary task is to find pieces (or design them) and show to the client how the interior will work from a long-term perspective.

After years of designing private and commercial architectural projects, we noticed certain items that are hard to find in the market. As a result, the next evident step was to create a whole new brand: O&A London. We started by designing pieces that we could not find for our own projects. For example, the back of the Pictor II armchair from our collection is particularly unique. From our experience, we perceived that spacious living rooms require a group of two armchairs that viewers can observe from different angles, and so the Pictor II came to life. In the same vein, difficulties sourcing lighting for high-ceilinged spaces led us to design our three-metre chandelier Meissa. These innovations fill gaps in the market. We do not follow trends by creating furniture just for decoration's sake. We find solutions. New materials and technologies are only the instruments. Tailored furniture items have always been featured in our projects. We design all built-in furniture and 20 per cent of stand-alone items. Our idea is to create furniture that can match any interior style. All items produced by us reflect the



Above: photography courtesy of Mel Yates

concept of universality, timelessness and that notion of passing from generation to generation.

The most popular request from clients for us is for decorative lighting products. Desks are also an important concern for our clients. We observe a real shortage of these pieces because they are quite complicated

design-wise, but our clients trust our exceptional production capabilities as architects.

The most common problem we come across is finding trustworthy manufacturers. The second challenge relates to suppliers. For example, we often combine wood and metal in our pieces, and it is a challenge to link the suppliers and organise

OLEG KLODT & ANNA AGAPOVA

production management, especially when bronze is used. The most experienced workshops that work with this metal are in France, and they are overly cautious about new commissions as they try to keep their production methods a secret.

Our journey to creating O&A London has been long and full of learning curves. Meticulousness and integrity in the quality of the product has helped us to find reliable partners.

It is important for us, in all sectors of our businesses, to understand our clients' needs so, before starting the design process, we ask our clients to fill out a form. These questions help us to find a visual territory for future items. But there are no guarantees when met with challenging situations. In this business, especially in the high-end segment, you have to balance between the aspirations of the client and our artistic principles. Our clients are often eccentric people. Some do not like sharp corners or particular materials, or cannot tolerate specific fabrics. It is unpredictable. That is why we keep close contact with the client. The most important thing is to understand the lifestyle of the person. We have learned to build a dialogue, the result of which is a design product that meets two criteria at the same time - the dream of the client and the pride of the designer.

Looking outside of the UK, we are hugely inspired by global trends and in particular, we are in love with American brands.

There are two groups; the first is represented by premium design companies such as Holly Hunt, these companies offer top-class design products; the second group covers young artistic

Lindsey Adelman, BBDW. These guys produce exceptional items through experimentation, which provides us with plenty of inspiration. We are fascinated by the creativity and intelligence that lies behind each product. Regular visits to France give extraordinary opportunity to feed the mind too. Furniture ideas for 2019 are not necessarily set in stone. Trends are replacing each other at an increasing rate and often mixing. But every time, as they come to the fold again, they are transformed due to new technology and this is exciting for

us in the furniture sector. We are confident that architects and designers will continue to create spaces and products that link us with the past.

Peoples' desires to remain in spaces of comfort and calm, where they can explore real human connections, remains as true as ever. That is why we created the brand O&A London, reflecting these values and serving to offer clients something timeless.

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Above: photography courtesy of Mel Yates



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