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**FROM VENICE  
TO NEW YORK**

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# VENETIAN APPEAL

With its wealth of art and crafts, **Venice** is a constant source of inspiration for **contemporary design**. And a factor of **pride and reference** for the designers who grew up amidst its canals

by Domitilla Dardi



Zaven, Oselèto for **Maison 203**, 2017. The use of 3D printing to reinterpret timeless archetypes of Venetian identity with the tools of the present: the pigeons of San Marco become a decorative motif that relies on collective memory.







Zanellato Bortotto, Petali mirror for **Ongaro & Fuga**, 2018 (left) and the Marea series of cabinets for **De Castelli**, 2018 (below). The design duo makes explicit reference to the workmanship of antique Venetian mirrors, and the chromatic shadings created on walls by the phenomenon of acqua alta.



Below, Matteo Zorzenoni, Blow Bowl for **Nason Moretti**, 2018. The most immediate association with Venice is that of the tradition of craftsmanship of blown glass. Designers today are taking advantage of this legacy of know-how, reinterpreted in a contemporary way.

generating an effect of perfect balance between organic and abstract. Closer to the theme of transparency in glass, also in multiple color variants, Matteo Zorzenoni has designed Blow Bowl and Twist for Nason Moretti, both works that link back to very old techniques of glass blowing, reinterpreted with the freshness of contemporary design. The most international member of this generation of Venetian talents, Luca Nichetto, is still proud of his background as well. Operating in Italy, Northern Europe and the Far East, Nichetto brings a Venetian accent to the heart of his projects. Besides the reference to glass – see his Gemo inspired by the ground glass lamps of the Venetian tradition – the image Nichetto seems to have brought with him in his design wanderings is that of the boats on the canals and the lagoon. The sea dotted with little vessels that enter the city is a reference point the designer has used for the abstract design of the Regata Storica carpet for Nodus, or the recent Canal Chairs for Moooi. Here it is the prow of small boats anchored

along the canals that generates a multiform, multicolored memory. It makes the designer think about the fact that in the domestic landscape the most visible part of a dining chair is the back, in an association with the image of moored boats that becomes a forceful guideline in the project. Every boat is different from the others, and its decoration reflects the personality of its owner, likewise, the chairs can be personalized by means of a wide range of fabric coverings, ready for customizing with names, coats of arms, decorations.

The theme of the power of memory is absolutely central in the case of an iconic city like Venice. Also for this reason, some designers who live and work in the city have explored a typology in which memory is a primary function: the souvenir. Zaven has delved into reflections that lead to small objects that have the rationality of authentic memory and the tact of lightness: jewels that remind us of carnival masks, reinterpreted through digital geometry and 3D printing, or chocolates with the miniaturized forms and proportions of the city's monuments, placed in dialogue with the profiles of the ocean liners that regrettably invade its skyline. Marco Zito has also contributed, with his ferryboats in solid wood, to the project of Pieces of Venice, a small brand entirely focused on the theme of the souvenir. In this case the idea is to take a true piece of the city back home, because all the products are made by hand with wood salvaged from piers and poles. Again in this case, every piece is unique and different from the others, thanks to its imperfect nature. ■

