

# KHALEEJ

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# DAILY EMBELLISHER

## THE THOUGHTS OF UPCOMING PRODUCT DESIGNER MARC DIBEH

By Cyril Zammit, Design Days Dubai Fair Director

**H**umor, undertone messages and attention to detail are a few factors that Lebanese designer Marc Dibeh considers when going through a project. I had my first encounter with him during a Design Days Dubai work trip to Lebanon. I met Dibeh with Marc Baroud, who started out as his teacher and later on became a close friend and one of his design collaborators. What struck me about Dibeh, a graduate from Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts, is the purity of lines in his designs. Going through his timeline, I realized there were a few details missing and I was curious to find out more. His replies to my questions helped fill in some of the gaps, follow my interview and learn more about the upcoming designer.

**Cyril Zammit:** Let's rewind a little and go back to 2006, once you returned to Lebanon, transitioning from architecture to design seemed ideal, what is it in

architecture that you disliked that you managed to find in product design?

**Marc Dibeh:** I guess it's the scale, and the range. I always knew that I would end up in this field even when I was studying architecture in Paris. It was just a matter of time. Coming back to Beirut in July 2006 for a summer vacation and ending up stuck here because of the war was nothing but a sign for me. So I decided to stay and change my plans. Knowing you are able to design something within reach for anyone, that could be for daily use, or this one of a kind piece for some special shot was way more exciting for me.

I like to call it a "daily embellisher."

**C.Z.** Winning Hansgrohe's Axor bathroom design contest, after graduation yet still a student at the time of design, must have been a great feeling. Could tell me what was the design process for your

entry?

**M.D.** In all my design processes I try to emphasize as much as possible on the narrative stories. Whether it's a small-scale product or a bigger scale interior. The Axor project was a new bathroom concept that was actually not so new. The idea behind it was to take the bath process back to its sources. Over time, it became kind of private. Initially, the "bath ceremony" was public. (The Hamams, the water source in a village etc.).

One element, around which one could shower or wash his hands. This element and the way it drops water was inspired by trees and leaves.

I really studied it in detail to have a story telling around the interaction between the water and the objects skin.

**C.Z.** You have collaborated a few times >>



with fellow designers, I noticed that collaborations sometimes result in formation of a unified studio, but not in your case. What are the factors or attributes that make you enter a project with a designer?

**M.D.** All of these collaborations are happy accidents. The part I love most in the creating process is the brainstorming and the back and forth conversations with people surrounding you, whether they're designers or not. Having a different opinion and point of view on your ideas can turn out to be pretty fruitful. Vice versa too. And sometimes it ends up with "know what? Let's do it together".

**C.Z.** Marc Dibeh designs are subliminal messages covered by a layer of humor; I thoroughly enjoy the background stories, and particularly the most recent during your last solo show "a narrative selection of stolen products". Though they are meant to be 14 different houses, the materials used are consistent. Was that an intentional undertone? Could they eventually be from one home, each piece

telling a story of a different period of time?

**M.D.** In my case, the most important thing in an object is the story telling. From Hansgrohe's line, to the "Wires" series, to "please don't tell mom" and "A narrative selection of stolen products". Crashing 14 different homes made me end up with 14 different stories. Every product has a different story. Because they're part of the same series, I had to find a way to unify them without killing the initial mood or intention. This is why we opted for neutral yet elegant materials.

**C.Z.** After seven years in the product design industry, as well as lecturing at two universities, what keeps you motivated and sparks your imagination? And what can we expect from you for the upcoming season?

**M.D.** The most important thing to keep your imagination sparking is to look around and be curious. Daily facts, conversations with friends, irrelevant little details that no one paid attention to. As for motivation, waking up every day

“The most important thing in an object is the story telling.”

knowing that you're creating something concrete and new that somewhere, someone, will use, and that through its story telling, he'll smile, react, or even interact with it, is gold.

One leitmotiv since the first day I started was "do things seriously without taking yourself too serious".

We're finishing up some residential projects we've been working on for a while now.

In October we are presenting "Love the bird" at the Mudac museum in Lausanne, then with ArtFactum Gallery, we'll be presenting "a narrative selection of stolen products" at the Design Days Dubai and some other fairs. ■

*The career of Parisian born Cyril Zammit has spanned continents and cultural platforms. Now as the Fair Director of Design Days Dubai, Zammit curates collectable and limited edition designs to produce a definitively modern show. [www.designdaysdubai.ae](http://www.designdaysdubai.ae)*

