

Vincenzo de Cotiis opens at Willer Gallery

The Italian architect, designer and sculptor showcases his Progetto Domestico collection at Willer Gallery's new pop-up space

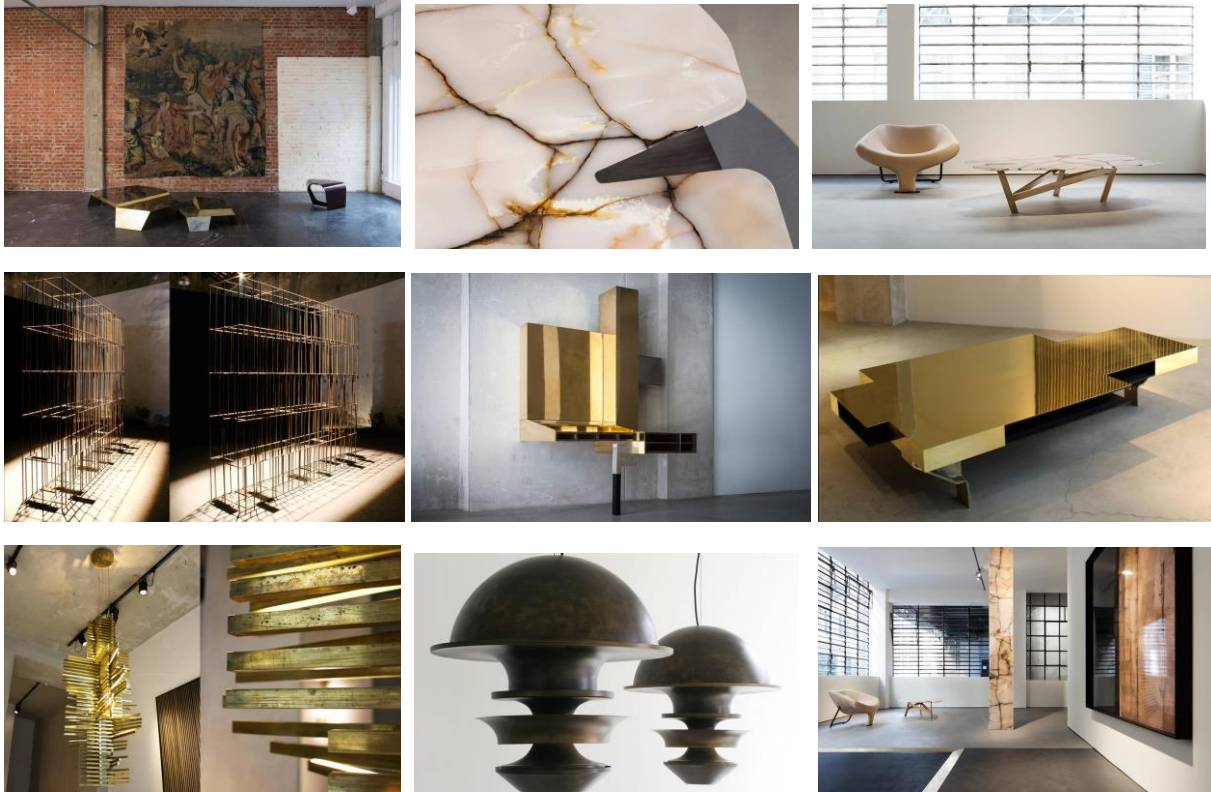


BY HENRIETTA THOMPSON

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Salvage and reclaimed materials – traditionally the most economical options for designers – have risen dramatically in value of late. The history of a piece of found timber, the patina on a sheet of old metal, a worn strip of leather, can add untold charm and a narrative to a object or piece of furniture that – designed well – is genuinely unique. It's at the most luxury end of the scale that reappropriation really comes into its own. Opening a show at [Willer Gallery's](#) large new pop-up space (close to the original gallery just off High Street Kensington) this week, [Vincenzo de Cotiis](#) knows this better than most.



The Italian interior architect, designer and occasional sculptor, de Cotiis is bringing his much acclaimed Progetto Domestico collection to London for the first time. A collection of furniture largely crafted by hand by de Cotiis himself, Progetto Domestico is made from lavish materials that are both recycled and exposed. On show at Willer are a luxurious coffee table, a brass tubular stool, glamorous brass sconces, a dramatic silver plated ceiling light and a sculptural leather sofa and armchair. Many are made from materials that have already seen another lifetime, and come complete with signs of age and use.

De Cotiis's designs are an exercise in contrasts: here the new, precious or industrial, meets the rough and raw. Smooth and sparse meets grand and fabulous. And no matter what the commission in question, the materials always come first – dictating the form more than any end function might. His process are experimental, using contemporary techniques and inventing new processes to manipulate forms and achieve the sophisticated results that have been dubbed “industrial elegance” and “monastery meets laboratory”.

Born in Northern Italy, de Cotiis studied art in Venice before switching to study architecture at the prestigious Milan Polytechnic. After designing a friend's boutique he caught the eye of Sergio Gandini, chairman of Italian lighting company Flos, who duly opened a studio for him.

As an architect, the Milan-based de Cotiis has been responsible for several decadent fashion temples in the capital including Antonia in Brera, and Excelsior Milano as well as numerous retail, hospitality and hotel projects around the world. In the mid-2000s he also launched his own experimental fashion line, which took his same approach to materials and saw ripped and washed silks combined with antique lace and glass. Many of his commissions today, however, are residential – where he and his studio find they can operate with more creative freedom and take more risks without having to bow to commercial considerations.

When personally crafting “the patina of life” de Cotiis works from one of his two workshops in the country outside Milan, which he refers to as his “laboratories”. Here, he says, he strives for “perfect imperfection” through “deconstruction, reconstruction and reappropriation”.

Recycled they may be, but the lifecycle of de Cotiis’s pieces ends here – they are created to last and last. Rebecca Willer, his new UK gallerist, senses genius at work: “The texture and patina of exquisite and often unexpected materials which only handcrafted work can reveal, allied with the refinement achieved by a true understanding of form and proportion, and finally the genius of being able to combine both in a piece that can be used and enjoyed as part of daily life – this is furniture that is undoubtedly an art form, but which is usable, comfortable to live with, and which will just get better as it ages.”

WILLER GALLERY

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