



Yaron Elyasi

By: Daniella Ohad

I first met Yaron Elyasi, founder of ETTO Design Lab, in the winter of 2009, while rambling throughout Israel in my eternal search for great design. With design garnering prominence in the 21st Century, we witness what Hal Foster calls the "inflation of design." In other words, there is a lot of design out there; but the finest is rare. If our time's notion of good design is defined as: environmentally responsible; intriguing; innovative; sustainable; savvy; global; personal; objects that make us think differently about design; objects representing our epoch; if this complicated definition is valid, then Yaron Elyasi's work can certainly be classified as "great design". The foundation of his message is a value-based technology, a process he developed over the past decade, which gives recycled plastics new life.

For Yaron's direct approach of integrity and honesty, for his ability to bring together ideas that capture our moment, for a remarkable combination of high and low technology, and for the visionary use of recycled plastic, a material that takes thousands of years to break down, for all of these, my affinity was born on that day, in the winter of 2009. Behind every designer there is a person, and I have since had the honor to know the man behind the designer. Yaron is not only a visionary whose work is on a direct path into the pantheon of contemporary design, but he is also a compassionate man who shares an inspired optimism; a man whose determination and talent fuel his creativity as an educator, thinker, and designer.

In Italian, ETTO means an individual portion, equal to 100 grams of pasta. This humble word conveys the philosophy of ETTO, both aesthetically and conceptually. While his work is composed of freestyle rods of plastic, "ETTO," Yaron explains, "is also personal, just like my objects." In Yaron's production line, every piece is unique, each exclusive, each different. Just like people asserting their personal identities

within their communities, striving for individuality in the age of globalization, so do his objects offer their own uniqueness.

Gaetano Pesce is the man behind the groundbreaking idea that even in a system of assembly-line mass production, it is possible to ensure that every single piece, while similar-looking to the others in the same series, is unique. Pesce is a leading figure in the Italian Radical Design Movement, and best known for his experimental approach to design. He suggests that while the machine has the tendency to eliminate human spirit from manufactured objects, and while in his words "our job as designers is to make multiple pieces," he proffers various manual interventions, which is how he creates unique objects. Louis Comfort Tiffany also achieved individuated production in the early 20th Century by introducing glass coloring-sheets, which granted each lamp a signature identity, even when multiplied in a same mold as others. In Pesce's work, with the aid of a manufacturing process that employs dynamic resins, each piece manifests an original element. Now, ETTO appropriates this individuated production while simultaneously embodying other principles of great design.

ETTO has also secured its place in the history of plastics design, achieving a new meaning with the use of the ubiquitous petroleum by-product. While in the 1960s, plastics were perceived as the future, by the 1990s they were perceived as noxious, requiring thousands of years to decompose. Recycling became the preferred alternative. Jane Atfield was a pioneer of recycled design, and began making chairs of recycled plastic bottles. Atfield formed the foundation of an environmentally-friendly design movement. Now, ETTO has proposed a new way to utilize recycled plastic for making new and well-designed products.

Collecting contemporary design has become one of the most exciting, surprising, dynamic, and influential areas in the international marketplace. Yaron Elyasi's contribution as a visionary and innovator is catapulting him into the pantheon of legendary designers, while ETTO is fulfilling his idiosyncratic approach to design. With their green philosophy, their commitment to the essence of individuality, and their aesthetic distinction, ETTO's objects are a great addition to any progressive collection of design.

