

Bloko 748 (Antonio Davanzos + Victor Mikos)

Laguna Antropica

Bloko 748, the artistic duo comprised of Viktor Miklos and Antonio Davanzo, fuse highly calibrated tools such as 3D printing with inventively daring handcraft. Resins drip, finishes are sprayed, colors look hazardous, forms are looped and knotted and hacked into shape in a way that suggests not so much the making of furniture as a loosely coordinated attempt to keep a ship afloat during a storm—cobbling together all manner of materials and coatings into ad hoc forms which might, in some way, plug the leak. The fact that their stuff works, that it fulfills the function requirements of its typological referent, seems, from the perspective of traditional craft, simply outrageous. And yet, behind their steroidally synthetic techniques lies a program of rigorous experimentation and a keen instinct for the nuances of composite engineering—the way that fabric can bolster the strength of resin, the way that resin can lend rigidity to a fabric.

Furniture usually points towards a function. Bloko748' work backflips, somersaults, and lands on functionality with a single foot. By harnessing their sculptural energies to the typological forms of furniture the artists suggest that even the most prosaic environments can be made explosive, exciting, and aesthetically shattering—that the upheavals we now go to art galleries expecting to see can be refreshed by being insinuated into waiting rooms, around conference tables, and before writing desks.

An exemplary instance of their artistic process can be found in *Hound*, a spotlight. First the artists 3d printed a quadrupedal base supporting a cylindrical torso. Then they began to assault it with torches and hot knives, carving, melting, and wounding its plastic skin. Unsatisfied with their pristine, digitally derived model, they felt the need for a final cathartic modulation by manual action.

Bloko748, established in 2021, picks up and formalizes a creative collaboration that began when Miklos and Davanzo were fellow students at Eindhoven Academy. Following his graduation, Miklos first gained prominence as part of the duo OrtaMiklos, creating objects which live in the permanent collection of the Centre Pompidou and receiving wide international

acclaim. Davanzo, whose background is in digital media, brings to the collaboration a new depth of technical capability. The synergy of Miklos' hands-on material experimentation with Davanzo's digital toolset is now the crux of their joint artistic enterprise.

For *Untitled*, their solo show debuting during the Venice Biennale, Bloko748 took inventory of the eclectic nature of Venice's made environment. Davanzo, who was born just a few kilometers inland, describes the unique strangeness of a city which assiduously preserves its building facades to maintain a historical condition that was historically never static. For centuries Venice's material identity evolved through salvaging, plundering, trade, and local production. Under a regime of enforced tradition (the entire city is a Unesco World Heritage site), anachronistic exteriors now conceal modern interiors. This contradictory composition suits the sensibility of Miklos and Davanzo. Their latest body of work deploys a hodgepodge of contemporary and ancient materials, carbon fiber filaments and seventeenth-century timbers, collapsing period references into a magpie contemporary. In a sense, this assimilative technique hews closer to the spirit of the city's history than fixed fidelity to a bounded past. Indeed, the great architectural fantasist Giovanni Piranesi, also from the Veneto region, similarly took antiquity as the basis for a feverishly imagined alternate reality, one neither present, future, or past—but a synthesis of imagination, prophecy, and scholarship. Change is constant—stasis, an aberration.

Visitors to *Untitled* will mark that Venice's inside/outside dichotomy has arrived at a radical apogee. Bloko748's chairs, tables, suspended lights, and shelving summon to mind, in Davanzo's words, "furniture from a primordial cave designed by a super-computer." It is left to the audience to imagine what kind of world waits outside that cave. This is a strategy of world-building that begins with the grains of the pedestrian and daily—items of domestic convenience—and lets the rest begin to congeal from there. There is a certain aesthetic autonomy, a strength of purpose, that the objects gain from being the primary catalysts of the

reality that forms around them. They have their own energies and needs—and so they become more than functions awaiting fulfillment. A Bloko748 chair is never empty. When a person gets up, it holds up the sky. When the empty chair rises to this occasion, it becomes glorious.