

THE USE OF MIRRORS AND GLASS IN FURNITURE

Fatma Çolak

Bellona Design Manager

As an architect what are the advantages and disadvantages of working in an industrial design space for you?

Design is the most principal subject taught in architecture. The main subject of architecture, interior architecture or industrial design is design. Therefore, I did not have much trouble doing industrial design as an architect. In furniture/industrial design, you experience a much shorter process compared to a building or a large complex. The product you start designing is presented to the market within three to nine months. Also when it is furniture, you see your designs more widespread. For example, when you design a home you can see them in that area, in magazines but when it comes to furniture or industrial design, it can be in every space in every home. You can be present throughout Turkey or even on an international scale. The satisfaction experienced is different. Detail solutions are a field that is more different and open to innovation.

Compared to boutique design, industrial design can limit your freedom. In order to produce an object/furniture, you need to know the production limitations very well and do your designs accordingly. This sometimes causes very different designs to emerge, when you want to make different designs. It is not always possible to realize your dreams. Just like everyone else our first priority is to design with user friendly, ergonomic and environmentally sensitive materials. If you are designing an object/furniture that the user comes into contact with all the time you have to think of every comfort and use, you have to make it comfortable to make people happy.

How long have you been working for the Bellona brand? What are the challenges that designers face in the field of industrial design in Turkey?

I have been designing for the Bellona brand for 15 years. In the beginning, I designed for İstiklal too. But it was decided to separate the brand and designs. I have been working for only Bellona for about 6 years. During design formation, you only get theoretical formation and even though design projects are carried out in school, this is usually not in touch with the industry and market. Most designers are trained without them actually seeing the challenges of the work until they actually start working somewhere. If only there was a master apprentice system in our education system too. If only there was a requirement to work with a business owner master for 2-3 years after graduating from school. In Europe and the US, people are doing better work thanks to schemes like these. Doing the work without knowing the work well is the biggest difficulty, but of course it gets easier by experience. Also, what the designer dreams cannot always be realized for industrial design. Production limitations, material limitations and ergonomic problems can occur. But then everything starts with a dream, right?

Do you find Turkey's work on innovation to be sufficient? What kind of variety does this type of work provide or not provide in the field of materials?

The work in innovation in Turkey is very insufficient. I feel as though we don't fully understand the concept of innovation. Especially in the furniture sector, it is difficult to see the reflections of different thoughts. Firstly, we need to change our perspective. We all need innovations that unite technology and furniture, and that can be a bridge. But there is still copycat work going on. First of all, the R&D centers in Turkey need to be made more essential. We need to forge the way for people who will do this work in R&D centers.

Mirror and glass are some of the most frequently used materials in furniture. What do you think is at the base of this unchanging tradition? Do you have designs based on mirror and glass?

Mirrors and glass is very important and a must have. Glass is a material that is both materially and morally transparent; it is as true as possible, does not hide anything and when colored adds color to the setting. In our collections there are pieces of furniture in our dining rooms, in showcase and silver display cupboards where we can show off the objects we want our loved ones to see. Therefore, glass is important to us. It is one of our main materials. Mirrors, with their reflection, gives us the feeling of spaciousness, light up our spaces and furniture and have a structure that teaches us what we are. Especially in sleeping spaces, we need to see what we are wearing day and night so mirrors are indispensable. Therefore mirrors are a must in bedroom furniture. So do you think glass or mirror are functional materials? Thanks to the latest technology, we are painting them now, we are doing digital printing on them, and we are now able to use them for any aesthetic needs in matt, frosty, sandy and other forms. People are actually creatures that are always trying to solve a number of emotions within themselves. These materials and other materials appeal to the emotions. For example, the world reflected in a mirror even looks different and makes you feel different. This and more make these materials our basic materials I think.

Our living spaces are getting smaller every day. What are the advantages of using Flotal mirrors? How do you use this material that is identified with modern architecture in your designs?

Especially in large cities the apartments are now smaller. As spaces get smaller, the area covered by furniture becomes more important. Now, the furniture must carry out the function that is expected of them, but at the same time fulfill the aesthetic expectations and make the area more spacious looking. About 10 years ago, the African rosewood color was very popular. But right after, white became popular. One of the most important reasons for this was spaces becoming smaller, and the rosewood was overwhelming small spaces. In recent years, we have been adapting mirrors to furniture, because they make the space look larger and we have favored the use of Flotal. No matter what color you combine them with, mirrors make the space look wider. Mirrors are no longer used in an aesthetic sense in their purest form; the patterns, extra colors, etc. that we have put on them provide a more aesthetic look. Therefore, the mirrors that we only used in wardrobes, make-up mirrors and consoles are now being used in almost all units of furniture. We now use mirrors easily in the console itself. Mirrors will continue to be an indispensable material for us as long as spaces get smaller.

