



A Contemporaneity of Functionless Forms

‘Machines would not exist without us, but our existence would no longer be possible without them’¹

Living in an aestheticised world, ruled through an excess of production, there is no wonder an emerging artist would seek to render material form as useless. Strength broken through sharp angular cuts, repositioned and fused again to bond an absence that pervades and identifies the partial industrial object; beauty in its minimalist form. It is man who controls machine. Tools function in extension to his arms - slicing, burring, grinding, rupturing and re-stabilising - a continual process of destruction and rebuild.

Following in his father’s footsteps, Basil Papoutsidis initially thought he would become an industrial designer, yet with an artistic disposition. There was a calling to be free from the limitations and expectations imposed onto the designer from their audience. As a contemporary artist, it seems more honest to believe that it is only oneself that imposes rules and expectations upon what is to be created. Papoutsidis insists his work remains functionless.

The designer - artist - father - son relationship is important in Papoutsidis’ artistic practice. Within a studio space, a father and son’s practice is mirrored, creating a dialogue on aesthetics and the functionality of objects within our lives. This space - a studio, a shed, a man cave - functions as masculine site, a sanctuary, plentiful in the transfer of traditions, knowledge and practice. Art and design become the shared medium, the shared reason and the tool for a continued fostering of father and son bonds.

Fractured lines, powder coated in engineered bold colours juxtaposes subordinate, geometric shapes in neutral tones. Hearken back to the era of European dominance in the purity of design and engineering. Bold, colourful designs of industrial, contrast the cobbled stones and museological heritage of Italy and Greece, Papoutsidis’ sculpture, a homage and yearning to the legacy of this era, renowned for its precision and craftsmanship. Yet this fracturing and minimalism, present within his work, speaks of our contemporaneity’s obsession with mass production, mass consumption, cost efficiency and material value. Papoutsidis’ minimalist vehicles, partial in their form - memorialise this lost heritage of European prestige and design - the gallery space, formalises itself as the mausoleum to these objects. Yet, the splintered movement within these forms suggests only dormancy, as a state of temporality. As Papoutsidis repurposes these materials, he re-awakens them through their state of continual transformation, each time visually referring to an extraction from the past.

Dormancy suggests life without a current state of growth. However, when these vehicles surpass their enclosing walls, one can only imagine a true awakening occurring.

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¹ Quote taken from Pierre Duscusse, as found in Bruno Munari. *Design as Art*. London: Penguin, 1966. p.13.

