

# Greece is for lovers



## BIOGRAPHY

Thanos Karampatsos (product design, Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design), Christina Kotsilelou (product design and jewellery, Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design), met in London during their studies.

Sharing similar aesthetic influences, upon their return to Greece they formed "Greece is for Lovers", a creative group focusing on the design of domestic / utility products.

The group's title can be treated more as a general guideline rather than encompassing a fixed meaning.

Inspired by the stereotypical notion of what is widely held to be "Greek" (or otherwise to be "a Greek"), their designs comment on habitual activities and behavioral patterns both of the past and the present.

Their work refers more to a concept rather than a direct reference to the "old" and the "retro".

Their interest lies upon urban popular culture not only as it has been established in the past but most importantly as it is currently formulated with the intention of (re) discovering those elements that make up what can be called as the "Greek identity of the ordinary".

Exploring areas widely considered as an anathema, or plain kitsch, they comfortably retrieve aesthetic value and inspiration.

Greece is for Lovers operate as a creative studio as well as an own brand continuously working towards the production of limited edition objects.

## CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

### 2005

Vasso Damkou\*, Thanos Karampatsos, Christina Kotsilelou form "Greece is for Lovers" in Athens, Greece.

\*As from September 2010, Vasso Damkou has left the company, in pursuit of a solo design career.

### August 2005

"Pick-nick for 2" exhibition, Galerie Sophie Lachaert, Tielrode Belgium.  
Presentation of "Ingrid & Stavros", an underwater wine cooler.

### April 2007

"Salone Satellite" (Salone Internazionale del Mobile) exhibition, Milan Italy.  
Presentation of debut collection of objects.

### May 2007

"Athens vs. Berlin" exhibition, part of DesignMai festival, Berlin Germany.  
Group exhibition. Presentation of debut collection of objects.

### September 2007

"The Wonder Room", Selfridges & Co, London UK.

The "Build your Myth" dumbbells are stocked in a concept store set up within the department store.

### September 2007

"Handled with care" exhibition, organized by DesignBoom, part of Designer's Block, London UK.  
Presentation of "Ash is OK", a ceramic flowerpot – come – ashtray.

### September 2007

"100% Futures" exhibition, part of "100% Design", London UK.  
Presentation of product collection.

**October 2007**

“Message on the bottle”, exhibition organized by the Italian Cultural Institute, part of the Design Festival in Hamburg, Germany.  
Presentation of “Ingrid & Stavros”, an underwater wine cooler.

**October 2007**

Gwangju Design Biennale “100 Designers Light” exhibition, Gwangju, South Korea.  
Presentation of “Hermaphrodite” candles.

**November 2007**

Paul Smith Boutiques in Paris / London / Milan / New York.  
Greece is for Lovers merchandise stocked in the above renowned stores.

**December 2007**

Moss, New York.  
The “Hermaphrodite” candles are stocked in NYC’s premier design boutique.

**January 2008**

“Paris Capitale de la Création 2008”, Paris France.  
The “Build your Myth” dumbbells are offered as trophies to the exhibition’s 18 finalist designers.

**April 2008**

Deutsche Guggenheim Museum Shop, Berlin, Germany.  
Greece is for Lovers merchandise stocked in the above museum shop.

**September 2008**

“Message on the bottle”, exhibition at the Design Museum of the Triennale di Milano, Italy.  
Presentation of “Ingrid & Stavros”, an underwater wine cooler.

**September 2008**

“100% Design” exhibition, London UK.  
Presentation of latest product collection.

**April 2009**

“Elle Decoration’s: Young Talents on show”, exhibition at SuperStudio Piu, Zona Tortona, part of the 2009 Milan’s Design Week, Milan, Italy.  
Presentation of “Slice me Nice”, marble chopping board – come – herb crusher.

**April 2009**

“Love Design”, Daab Publishing.  
“R.I.P” candles featured in Daab’s design book.

**June 2009**

“Kitchen Ecology” exhibition, organized by Design Boom / Dwell, Los Angeles, USA.  
Presentation of “SuperFry”, a disposable paper recycling bin.

**September 2010**

Thessaloniki International Fair, Thessaloniki, Greece.  
Participation in an Art and Design exhibition organized by the Greek Ministry of Culture.  
Presentation of a selection of designs.

**September 2010**

“Episkepsi” Exhibition, the Angelos & Leto Katakouzenos Foundation, Athens, Greece.  
Presentation of “Tan Lines” a foldable furniture series made in sun-tanned leather, consisting of 4 limited edition sets.

**December 2010**

“The Christmas Card Exhibition”, DesignGalleriet, Stockholm Sweden.  
Presentation of “Ship A-ho-ho-hoy”, an oversized Christmas card made of sun-tanned leather, in DesignGalleriet’s charity event.

### **April 2011**

“Made in Greece” Exhibition, Harvard University, Cambridge Massachusetts.

Presentation of “Go Naked” a chair prototype in the architectural exhibition organized by Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design.

### **September 2011**

“Summer in the Middle of Winter”: Group Exhibition, Kunsthalle Athena, Athens Greece.

Presentation of the “Atlantish” collection, consisting of a clay water decanter and a silk scarf.

### **September 2011**

Tent London, part of the London design Festival, London UK.

Presentation of the “Atlantish” collection, consisting of a clay water decanter and a silk scarf.

### **October 2011**

Budapest Design Week, Budapest, Hungary.

Presentation of the “Build your Myth” dumbbells and the “Hermaphrodite Candles”.

### **April 2012**

“UpMarket Milan: A self-commissioned open gallery”. Milan Design Week, Milan,Italy.

Presentation of the “Atlantish” collection, as well as the “Go Naked” fur-lined plastic chair.

### **September 2012**

“Kopiaste’ exhibition, organised by Haptic Thought and Design Marketo, part of the London Design Week, London UK.

Presentation of “Ye Olde Feta Cheese”, a baking mould for bread.

### **September 2012**

“Action Field Kodra”, group exhibition, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Presentation of the “Go Naked” chair and “Amen” tableware.

### **December 2012**

“Mr.Bones” for Kiehl’s in Greece, Rebecca Camhi Gallery, Athens, Greece.

Presentation and auction of customised Kiehl’s iconic mascot Mr Bones .

### **December 2012**

“Oukan Introduces: Skin 1”,Group Art Show, Oukan Concept Store for Japanese and International Avant-Garde, Berlin, Germany.

Presentation of “Tougher than Leather’ skateboard in a curated collection of design curiosities.

## SELECTION OF PRODUCTS



**Demigod:** A graphic suggestion for a pot coaster. Water-jet cut in green or black marble.



**Hookers' Delight:** Martini glasses, accessorized with a silver olive hook.



**Zeus!:** A letter knife in solid or silver – plated brass.



**Hermaphrodite:** Two updated classics, Hermes by Praxiteles and Aphrodite of Milos, accessorized. A set of candles in 100% natural beeswax.



**Tan Lines:** A set of foldable furniture consisting of two chairs and a table. Made in aluminum and untreated leather, decorated with sun – dyed patterns.



**Tougher than Leather:** A leather – covered skateboard incorporating a pair of Greek sandals.



**Slice me nice:** A marble chopping board-come-herb crusher.



**Claymate:** A full scale skateboard, hand made in red earthenware, decorated in the style of ancient Greek pottery.



**Atlantish :** A silk scarf featuring the map of the Lost Atlantis, as well as a ceramic take of a Greek design classic: the ubiquitous Styrofoam water cooler.



**Build your myth:** A pair of dumbbells in solid brass, in the weight of 3 kgr.



**Flavour of the Month:** A paper-weight, made in white marble and chromed brass.



**Mr. Bones:** Kiehl's iconic mascot covered in 15.000 evil- eye glass beads.

# PRESS



PHAIDON



Wallpaper – City Guide Athens. Spring 2007

Wallpaper. January 2007





Wallpaper. March 2009



Frame. May - June 2009





PRODUZIONE *Interni e International*

**SANGUE, SESSO, CORPI MOZZATI. E ANCORA ELOGI ALLA LUSSURIA E ALLA MAGIA NERA. cibo e trasgressione SEMPRE PIÙ SULLO STESSO BINARIO. ALL'INSEGNA DI UN KITSCH CHE PERÒ AFFASCINA. ANCHE SE FORSE TOGLIE L'APPETITO.**

**PULP!**

Il nuovo mese. In prima ed grande pubblico. Ma che fa come tendenza nelle novità e proprio una sorpresa. A lato il tema ricomincia a sfuggire i confini, dal surrealismo (Stella Jaki, nell'ambito scultoreo) nell'arredo. Poi, adesso, il pulp invade il vivere, anche a più grande, il più forte delle nuove proposte di aziende e designer di tutto il mondo. Advantismo per una, avanguardia di un'idea. Come per il design. Ed è una avventura per alcuni a mettere a dieta, prima dell'indole? (Lorenzo Vitelli)

È UN'ESPOSIZIONE A NUOVA COLLEZIONE L'ARTISTICO ACCADEMICO IN SPAGNA. VINCITRICE PER BACCARAT

È ECONOMIA. VEDIAMO ALTERNATIVE. DALLA COLLEZIONE SUPER SPARKLING DI KUBO YAMAMOTO

È UN'OPERA. SOTTO LA SUPERFICIE È NASCOSTO UNO SPETTACOLO. A ROMA. SPARKLING ART CO.

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**GREECE IS FOR LOVERS**

ALCANTARA. SPARKLING ART CO. È UNA TAVOLA PER L'ARREDO. SPARKLING ART CO.

È UN'OPERA. SOTTO LA SUPERFICIE È NASCOSTO UNO SPETTACOLO. A ROMA. SPARKLING ART CO.

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Interni. April 2010



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**GREECE IS FOR LOVERS TURNS IDENTITY INSIDE OUT**

For Thanos Karampatos and Christina Kotidiou, the partners in Athens-based Greece is for Lovers, product design is the perfect vehicle for exploring their country's history and culture with elaborate, insider and-outer oriented art-in-chest merchandise. "We love to play around with stereotypes and misconceptions about our country and heritage," says Karampatos, 36, adding that their creations typically involve "large doses of humor and sarcasm."

The pair's Atlanticik decorative, for instance, is a previous terra-cotta interpretation of polystyrene water coolers popular in Greece, complete with marbled handle. The Atlanticik sofa set, from the same collection, is inspired by disposable paper tablecloth often used at seaside tavernas. And their Gu Nibak chair manages to transform the ubiquitous, and unattractive, white monobloc plastic seat into something desirable—with a layer of downy, retained fur. The common objective with all of these pieces, says the 33-year-old Kotidiou, is "the reintroduction of mundane objects and actions in a more sophisticated and luxurious context."

The partners met while studying product design at London's Central Saint Martins in 1998. Although they didn't see eye to eye in everything, they eventually founded their studio in 2006 after acknowledging they shared a common bond. "We are different in our tastes and preferences," Kotidiou says, "but Greeceism gives us a common ground on which to work." —E.M.

(TOP TO BOTTOM) Gu Nibak chair prototype (left); Atlanticik sofa (top); Greece is for Lovers (bottom) (2012)

Surface. November 2012

## CONTACT

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