

BITTEN BY AESTHETICS





As a designer, you cannot just love your craft; you need to be possessed by it.

Bieke Casteleyn was born to do what she does. Her fascination for aesthetics and her visual soul entice her to develop exclusive furniture and compose interiors that speak her language. We are happy to put her and her design on the foreground and asked her some questions about her work.

You know this designer both from BCINT, her interior studio, and from Bieke Casteleyn, her furniture label. Experts will know that she always strives for the smallest details and that her design looks effortless, while in reality it concerns a rare instance of designing and crafting. However, you cannot always reduce big passions like hers to an isolated point of origin that started it all. It seems like a love for design has always been a part of her persona. From when she was a child, she has had a visual memory and an above average attention to details. Everything she sees throughout the years stays somewhere on her patina. Before she worked for herself, she had a job that was really furniture oriented, which only strengthened the already existing fascination. Namely, she started to have more and more interest in the ways in which different

elements are attached, the working behind design, and the possibilities of materials and textiles. On top of that, she has a profound love for the history of design and objects, and mainly for the midcentury period, which she enjoys reading about and has an extensive knowledge of.

CONCEPTUALLY CONSISTENT

Customers know what they gain from this visual talent and her team. With her interior and architecture studio, she designs spaces that make a statement. A feeling for detail and a continuous search for innovation characterise the functioning of the studio, as well

as the headstrong but customer-focused vision that, commission after commission, she translates into a concrete overall project. A first contact with a potential client is mainly intended to see whether there is a connection between both parties, because often it concerns collaborations that, after all, span a considerable period of time. Not only that, but also carefully mapping out the clients'



wishes and seeing whether there is room to leave her mark for the full hundred percent are decisive. The latter is an indispensable element for the designer. She explains, in addition, that it is necessary to not leave too many choices up to the customer. It is the task of herself and her team to know what the correct options are. 'There has to be a conceptual line that is continued throughout,' she clarifies. Of course, a lot of time goes to preparing said concept. For example, the client is presented with an extensive mood board, ranging from materials and floors to painting and light switches. In this way a clear feel with the story can be built.

Casteleyn's interiors distinguish themselves from the mass of the high-end home segment. Each project comes from a unique idea, and nothing is left to chance. In this portfolio, originality is given a concrete form, and of course this happens for every client in a different way. This is also where the most fun is for the designer herself: exploring creativity and giving someone a new interior at the same time. Another characteristic aspect is that they only work with overall projects, since in this way, there is no question that the customer is completely unburdened and that the aesthetics are her vision from the beginning until the end. Even though each concept is approached from a different perspective, you can of course notice common characteristics. For example, she mentions the importance of spatial orientation, quality, high-end finishing, and tranquillity that is still created with the necessary details. She has no outspoken preference concerning materials, yet it is essential that a design grows from one specific matter. Next, she considers how the same material can be integrated again in the interior in several places and other notes are added to the palette. Her way of working usually does not use too many materials, in contrast to the number of details that she works into



her designs. Another returning aspect is the courage to work with colour; a characteristic which her interiors share with her furniture.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

If you currently mainly know Casteleyn from her furniture designs, you are no exception in that. Sometimes, she finds it a shame that most are only familiar with her design work, seeing that, in the long term, she had already spent more time on her interiors than on her products. Her Out of Line collection is a popular winner with the big public and, at least until now, it is the most striking example of her work. However, there is plenty more waiting in the future, because she wants to

A visual memory and an above average attention to details

explore a lot of directions. We asked her how she sees the further course of organic shapes, considering that these have been enormously popular the last few years. 'It would be great if my table collection ever becomes an icon. There will be periods when the organic receives more praise than in others, but there will always be lovers.' Still, she emphasises that, with her furniture label, she does not only want to be known for the organic, but instead she wants to bring people a large variety with her craftsmanship.



Recently, the designer experimented with a combination of stucco and leather. According to her, the intention was to add something soft, after which she ended up with Italian suede. By working with colours such as cognac, kaki, purple, and pink, pieces with spirit came to life. More concretely, she developed a home desk and shelf, among others. Her choice of materials resulted in a convincing success because the texture is nicely alternated with the caressability of the leather. The pieces look deceptively straightforward while they were technically really difficult to make, seeing that a lot of prototypes were needed to realise the current degree of perfection and custom work. With these designs, she mainly wants to do her own thing and not follow the sand-coloured Ibiza aesthetics that are scoring highly for the moment. Exceptional detailing is one of the big assets here, as you can notice with the drawers, which were finished with afrormosia.

After getting to know her work and vision even better, we also asked Casteleyn a few personal questions. 'What do people not know about me?' she laughs. 'That I am actually not a fan of Belgium when it comes to architecture. I am also not a commercial person at all, I have already moved many times, and I always want to take care of others.' When we ask what life really means to her, she explains how valuable time is and how important it is to take care of our health and energy. And she does not need to think long about her guilty pleasure: 'Stracciatella ice cream of Glacier De La Poste in Knokke during a walk on the sea dyke.' (Text: Cara Jacobs)

Photography by Olivier Striebae



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