



Share



Art & Culture

SALONE DEL MOBILE: OLIVIA PUTMAN

Published on 19 April 2015

words Giorgia Cantarini

Olivia is a respected and talented artist, landscape designer and interior architect who followed the footsteps of her mother, Andrée Putman, one of the most renowned interior designers of the last century. One of Andrée's wishes was to enhance the first fragrance she developed, the original Préparation Parfumée, with a full collection of fragrances that expressed moments of her personal memories.

With this in mind, Olivia, that in 2007 took the reins of Studio Putman Paris, has recently partnered with Intertrade Group, leader in the field of artistic perfumery, for the development of six fragrances to begin the dream. She sat with us during Milan Design Week to tell the story behind this unique project blending scent, style and of course, design.

What's the concept of this collection and why did you decide to present it during Design Week?

I wanted to create something that lets people experience my emotions and memories of my mother; a voyage into her soul and our life together seen through my eyes. The collection itself represents a concept that I call 'invisible design', with the vintage appeal of the flacon, the bright blu pantone (the colour that symbolizes all Putnam's creations) and the minimal and clean packaging. I wanted to express the identity of Studio Putman's style, and I strongly consider scents as impalpable creations that are constructed with ingredients and notes much more than physical components, and so they're not to be considered as pieces of design, but 'invisible design'.



What is your relation to perfumes?

It is a very strong and passionate one. Perfumes are a piece of who you are; they are the closest touch on your body, much more than clothes. They leave a trace when someone enters a room, they can empower you and make you feel different everyday. They also leave a memory trace in your mind; when you smell something, you recall special or bad moments, the smell of the people you love as the one of your mother or your boyfriend. For me it's like having a little photo album in your head that is made of scents.

How did you develop the fragrances? How did you process your creativity into the actual compositions?

I worked closely with Celso Fadelli, President and Fragrance Curator of the Intertrade Group, and his Creative Director Cristiano Segnanfredo, along with a team of experts to translate my brief and the ingredients that I love. *L'Original*, is the first composition that was created by my mother with famous perfumer, Olivia Giacobetti. *Magnolys* is dedicated to the magnolia, my mother's favourite flower. *Formidable* is a very energizing fragrance dedicated to my father. *Tan D'Epices* is a fun word implying sunbathing in spices. *Figure en Fleur* goes back to the scent of fig in Provence, and the last scent is *Un Peau d'Amor*, a joyful wish for happiness with tenderness with the warmest notes.

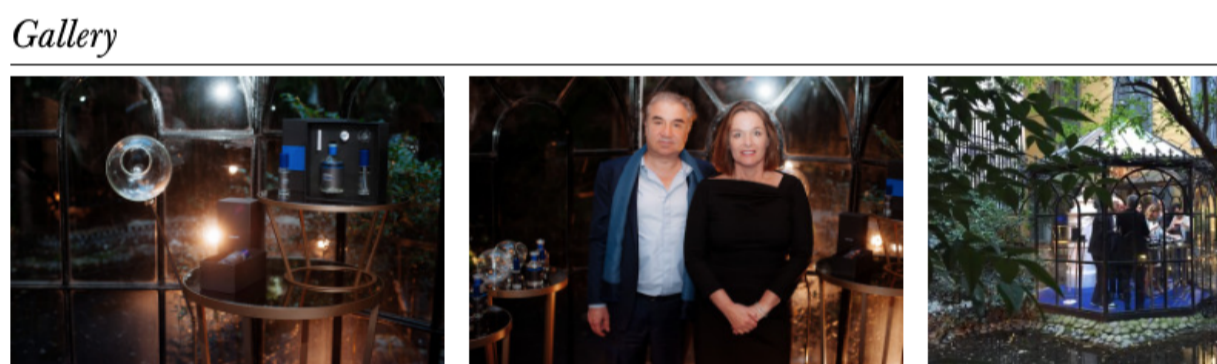
How did the idea of the kit come about?

It was the idea of having a good quantity of any fragrances in a bigger format that could be put into a smaller one. The artisanal aesthetics let the flacon become a nice bottle to place everywhere in the house, not only in the bathroom or bedroom. Then when you travel, it's possible with a little funnel to put your favourite scent into a 30ml box that can be carried along. I believe that when you love a perfume it becomes your second skin and you cannot go anywhere without it.

What is a definition of Putman's design?

My mother imagined an alphabet to "speak" in our own words. For more than thirty years, the Studio, established by Andrée, is encouraging a singular approach, a way of defining new stakes, an original way to understand objects and spaces, their meaning and their use.

Gallery



View all images

You have worked a lot with nature in your work as a landscape architect at the beginning of your career. How would you describe your relationship with Nature?

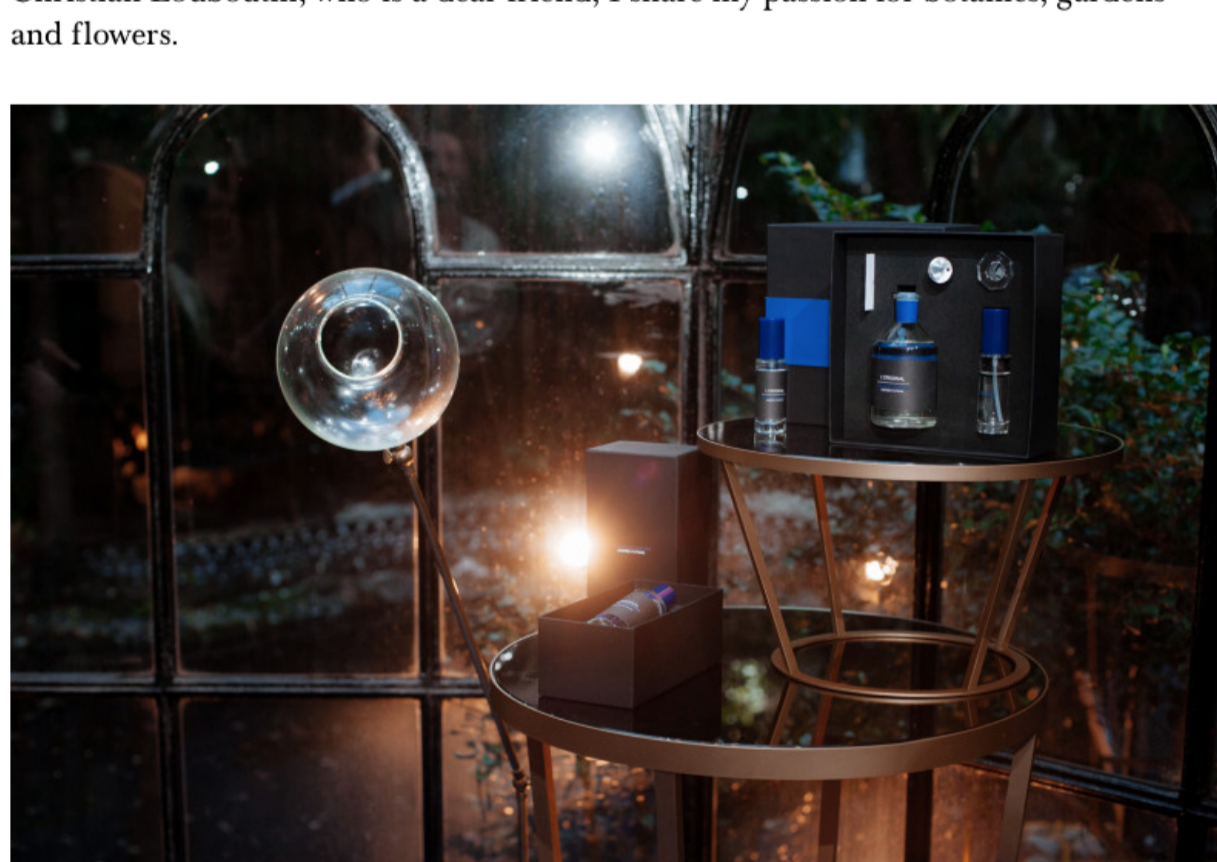
It's still very important to me as I love gardens and the natural perfection of Mother Nature; its symmetry and geometrics, and the simple elegance of all flowers, especially the white ones, my favourite of all.

What do you think about eco-friendly architecture, design, clothing and beauty products?

Pollution is only growing, and we live with too many chemicals; even the deodorant we all use contains aluminium. We are all responsible for our homes, so we can only help by simply recycling, try using natural products and so on. When I work, I use woods from well-known forests that are sustainable.

You met incredible people during your career, artists of the like of Basquiat and Warhol, and designers like Vincent Darrè and Christian Louboutin. What do you remember about them?

They were not important when I met them, but I'm very proud of them all to see what they've become. Basquiat had an incredible energy while he worked, and with Christian Louboutin, who is a dear friend, I share my passion for botanics, gardens and flowers.



What's your mother's legacy? Is there an important lesson she taught you?

Yes, to treat and listen to everybody equally. She taught me not to be nice just with important or rich people, in life and professionally. I believe in empathy and in close relationships in life and in work. When I have to design the interior of a hotel or home, or even a whole building, I have to get inside my client's head and understand what they would like to feel when they enter the space. Design has many styles and it's just as intimate as feeling certain garments or accessories.

How would you describe your style? What's your relationship with fashion, or favourite designers?

I love Jil Sander, it's simply nice, minimal, sleek, and the materials are amazing. I also dress with high-street brands or vintage; I don't mind to mix and match. For sure Louboutin shoes are my choice when it comes to footwear, and jewellery from Christoffle. I always wear my jewels and always the same pieces, and I must confess I also sleep with them. I can't separate from them!

What are your next projects?

I will be working with Lantana Airways, by redesigning the VIP Lounge of Santiago de Chile airport. I've found that hospitality design is growing and offers a different universe for my creativity. At airports you just have a few hours to relax while travelling and that time must be enjoyable, as well as when you stop in a hotel it must be a curated experience. I will open a hotel in Minorque and also present my own line of furniture in Hong Kong next May.

What are you 'hungry' for? What's that something that inspires you everyday?

'Un peu d'amour' because the only thing that really matters in life is love.

Find out more about Studio Putman on their website: studioputman.com

