



Clear forms and innovative materials

Unlike other industrial designers, the Basel-based industrial design office studio colony has decided against specialising in a certain field. The advantages of this approach are manifold – studio colony upholds the highest degree of innovation and is not afraid to outline new paths for its clients.

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studio colony was founded in 2012 by former fellow industrial design students Stephanie Estoppey and Ozan Alaca. After their studies, both have gained experience in industrial and interior design at renowned studios in New York, London, Munich, Frankfurt and Zurich. "Then we met again in Basel and while working on our first joint project, we noticed that we are on the same wavelength artistically," smiles Stephanie Estoppey. She adds: "The shape (materialisation, manufacturing, design) of surrounding objects is really important to us and we seek to influence it as much as possible. With the foundation of studio colony, we started to have the possibility to interpret creative aspects ourselves." Thus, since 2012, the team has implemented creative

product design ideas and has worked on interior or visualisation projects.

But why did they choose not to specialise on a specific field like other industrial

designers? Ozan Alaca explains: "We believe that the creative process is the same in different disciplines. Thus, working on furniture and consumer goods, as well as packaging design projects, isn't a problem." Furthermore, the duo's multi-disciplinary background in medical science and biochemistry enables a differentiated view on new projects and the small core team enables personal customer contact and short decision-making paths.





studio colony not only develops its own products and concepts and experiments with form and material, but also puts special emphasis on commissioned product design, interior or visualisation projects. "We give a client's idea a shape, develop concepts, visualise them and accompany them until realisation," says Stephanie Estoppey. studio colony's customer dealings are coined by transparent communication, extensive research about the needs and desires of customers, as well as about the requirements for the product. During the design process, the duo seeks to harmonise form and function and to find the best suitable material. Thereby, studio colony does not do superficial styling, but rather integrates the needs and the end user into the process from the very start. Ozan Alaca adds: "After all, we see the industrial designer as an interface between engineer and end user."

Most advanced, yet acceptable

This motto can be seen in each project of studio colony. "We aren't satisfied with the first idea that comes to us. We want to uphold the highest degree of innovation and aren't afraid to show our customers new paths – whether of technical or material-specific nature – with which new market sectors become accessible," notes Stephanie Estoppey. Working hand in hand with the respective engineers and having gained a large expert network, the outcome is sure to be a holistic product. While innovation is used in an inflationary way, it is still very important to studio colony. Ozan Alaca says: "A part of a project needs to contain innovation whether is it a newly introduced technology, a new material or an old material which has been combined with a new processing manner."

This innovation factor can, for example, be seen in studio colony's project for Rotavis.

Here, they designed a dynamic chair, the 'rotavis', which mobilises the pelvis and the spine. The patented mechanism was developed at the institute of mechanical systems (IMES) of the ZHAW. studio colony has worked closely alongside engineers to optimise the manufacturing process. While the chair is extremely slim and flexible when it gets assembled or dismantled, it also comprises of innovative padding. Folded steel has been used for incorporating the backrest instead of a casting part because it is much more cost efficient for smaller serial sizes. The special thing about the chair is its laterally swinging seating surface, which simulates the hip movement during walking. Thus, the chair's dynamics activate the lower back muscles. As opposed to conventional dynamic chairs, the centre of rotation can be found above the seating surface, which guarantees the natural movement. Stephanie Estoppey says: "The requirements for us were clear: a straight, appealing design which doesn't look like an old medical chair. The lean structure grants enough space for mobility and the padding can be easily replaced." Through its warm look and visible wood elements, the chair is able to integrate itself into a contemporary office environment.

studio colony's vast portfolio of commissioned work further includes a concept for business class tableware for Swiss International Airlines, a redesigning project of a dental practice, as well as designing an innovative packaging and storage system for Dagamas. In the four years since the foundation of studio colony, Stephanie Estoppey and Ozan Alaca have successfully realised many different projects and new, highly promising assignments are in the pipeline. "Because of this, we consider an enlargement of our team. At the moment, we deal intensively with a kitchen tap and faucet and a stool version of the 'rotavis' chair is planned which will guarantee even more mobility."

www.studiocolony.com

Portrait: Ozan Alaca and Stephanie Estoppey. © Claudia Link

Main image: The dynamic chairs 'rotavis'. © studio colony

Below: The dynamic chair 'rotavis'. © studio colony (left)

Dynamic chair 'rotavis'. © Sara Sezgin (right)

Above, from left: Textile partition walls in dental practice.

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A bench for both young and old for a dental practice.

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Porcelain that is furrowed by capillaries. © studio colony

Shelving system 'Umlaut'. © Reto Haeffliger

