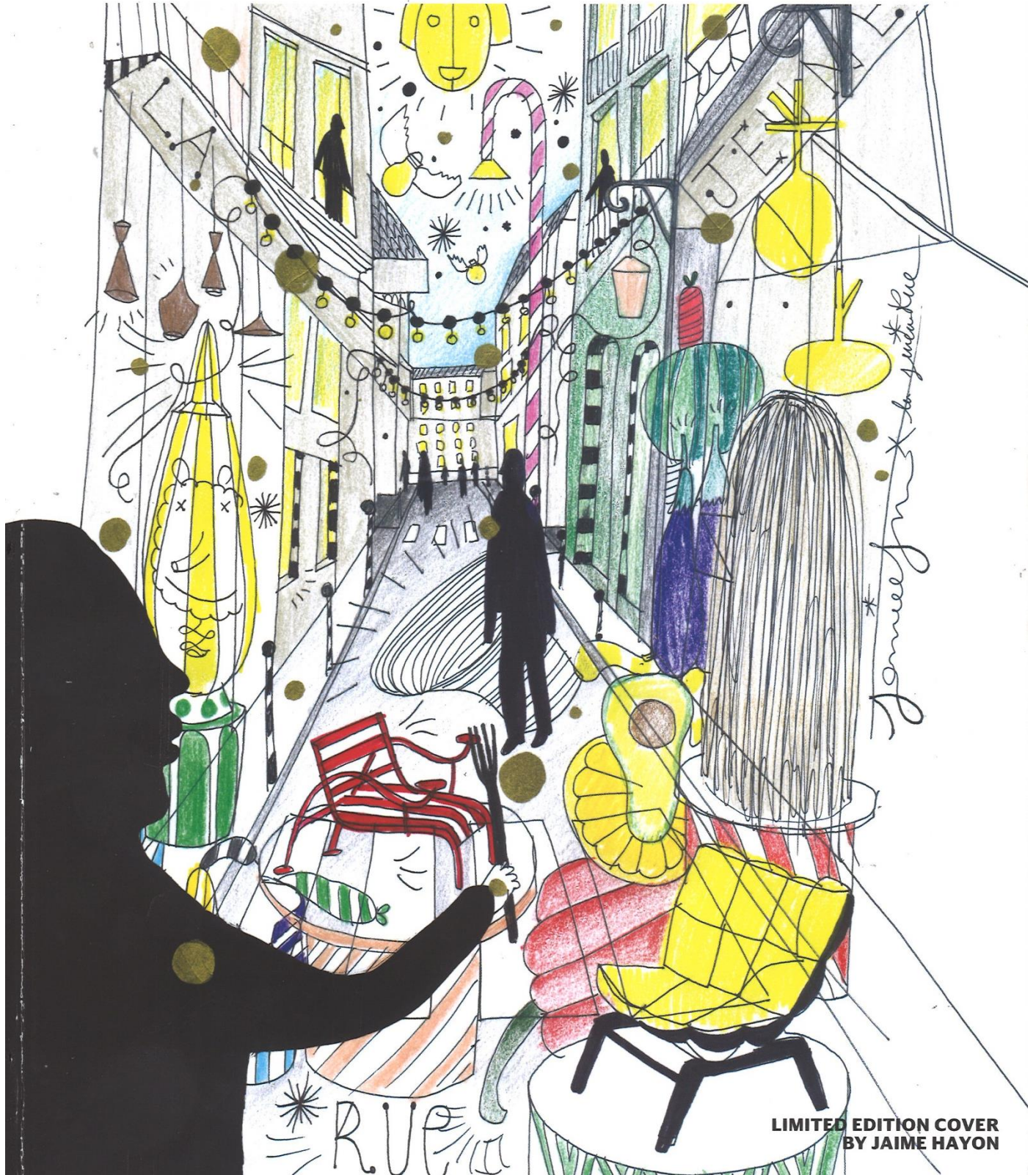
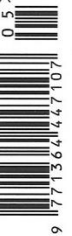


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LIMITED EDITION COVER
BY JAIME HAYON

DESIGNER NIKA ZUPANC AND SÉ FOUNDER PAVLO SHTAKLEFF AT THE BOSA FACTORY, TREVISO, ITALY, WITH A PROTOTYPE OF THE 'TROPHY' TABLE LAMP, SEEN IN WHITE AND GOLD PORCELAIN, FOR SÉ'S THIRD COLLECTION



Curve ball

Nika Zupanc's provocative glamour brings a playful touch to Sé's latest collection

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALBERTO ZANETTI WRITER: ROSA BERTOLI

Slovenian designer Nika Zupanc and Pavlo Shtakleff, the man behind furniture brand Sé, met in 2011 at Rossana Orlandi's Milan gallery, where they were both showing their collections. The strong affinities between their design philosophies were instantly apparent. 'Nika had an imagination and fantasy in her work that I thought could fit well with Sé,' explains Shtakleff.

He founded Sé London in 2006 with a mission to produce luxury furniture that was less about industrial lines and more about a 'glamorous, feminine and curvaceous' aesthetic. 'There was nothing like that in >>



the furniture industry,' he says. 'I wanted something soft, pleasing to the eye.' The visual concept was combined with the idea of enlisting a sole designer for each collection, handing over the reins of the brand to one creative director at a time.

Collection I was devised by French interior designer Damien Langlois-Meurinne and its subtle opulence has become Sé's signature. Then came Jaime Hayon, who defined the brand's style as 'haute couture furniture', a mission statement that has stuck. The collections share sinuous lines and a common material palette, but each new designer takes them to different places.

Zupanc has been enlisted to design the third collection, a year in the making, which will be on show during this year's Salone at Spazio Rosanna Orlandi, now practically the Milanese outpost of the London-based company. The space 'elevates the products and brings the pieces to life', says Shtakleff, describing its vaulted ceilings, crumbling frescoed walls and natural light as the ideal backdrop to the collections he commissions. 'The gallery has a lot of character but also a great deal of simplicity and minimalism.'

The Slovenian designer couldn't be a better match for Sé. 'I had this chemistry with the company,' explains Zupanc. 'I think Pavlo saw something familiar in my work and I could find myself in his work too.'

Zupanc's designs are witty and whimsical, sometimes cinematic and intent on packing an emotional punch. She is a master of curves and glamour, in an industry suspicious of both. 'I was trained as an industrial designer and the training was based on a modernist paradigm – form follows function – and I wanted to rebel.' She clarifies: 'Of course, I believe that form should follow function, but this is far from being enough in contemporary

ABOVE, 'OLYMPIA' SIDE TABLE, 'WHISPER' BOX AND 'OLYMPIA' VANITY TABLE BY NIKA ZUPANC, FOR SÉ, AT DE CASTELLI, A WALLPAPER* DESIGN AWARD-WINNING MANUFACTURER (W'15), IN CORNUDA, ITALY, WHERE METAL ELEMENTS FOR THE COLLECTION ARE PRODUCED AND ASSEMBLED WITH CERAMICS CREATED AT BOSA
RIGHT, PAVLO SHTAKLEFF WITH THE 'OLYMPIA' TABLETOP IN PRODUCTION AT BOSA



design.' Her work explores the principles of emotional ergonomics; she plays with symbols, she has ideas.

Her designs are divided between limited-edition projects and her own label's 'unlimited-edition' objects, as well as a series of commissions from international furniture brands such as Moooi and Moroso. 'I love to work with a company that defines the details of my work – I love to work inside a very small box, but I also like to throw crazy ideas around,' she explains.

Her work for Sé seems to fall somewhere between the two, starting with a conversation with >>



ABOVE, NIKA ZUPANC AT BOSA, SITTING ON A GIOSTRA CLAY-INJECTING MACHINE WITH SOME ROUGH CERAMIC PROTOTYPES FROM HER COLLECTION, INCLUDING THE 'WHISPER' BOX, AND 'TROPHY' TABLE LAMP, PLACED ON CERAMIC MOULDS

BELOW, FROM LEFT, 'OLYMPIA' VANITY TABLE, 'STARDUST' SOFA, 'SMOKE' COFFEE TABLE, AND 'TROPHY' TABLE LAMPS, ALL BY NIKA ZUPANC, FOR SÉ

Schtakleff and shared inspirations. 'I wanted the collection to be influenced by the 1950s,' he says. 'People would get really dressed up to go to someone's house, make an effort.'

The collection is made up of 15 pieces, produced in France, Italy and Slovenia; as with past collaborations, Schtakleff gladly welcomed his designer's input when searching out production facilities. They are both exacting clients, following each stage of production with equal parts passion and patience and learning in the process. Schtakleff feels strongly that designers should work with manufacturers to understand the limits of possibility and the concrete challenges posed by realising their drawings.

The new collection includes an upholstered sofa with the signature Sé curved lines; a glass and wood cabinet; and a coffee table comprising three interlocking circles in different metals. Lacquered ceramics are central to the collection, including the 'Olympia' vanity table, a piece that Schtakleff had wanted to produce for years but was waiting for the right person to trust with the design. Zupanc's rendition is visually striking but fundamentally simple, with a white lacquered ceramic base standing over a delicate metal frame, topped by a triple mirror mechanism with a movement that imitates butterfly wings. It's the perfect Zupanc for Sé piece; all curves, glamour, function and fantasy. ✪
'Sé Collection III by Nika Zupanc' at Rossana Orlandi, via Matteo Bandello 14-16, Milan, 8-13 April

