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Exciting Austrian design practice Destilat consider design as a diverse interdisciplinary interaction. Marg Hearn delves a little deeper.

Austrian design capabilities have come of age after emerging from a "shadowy existence" behind renowned design nations – Italy, Spain and Scandinavian countries, says Destilat co-founder Harald Hatschenberger.

A mutual "affinity" for design and coincidental timing united long-time friends Hatschenberger, Thomas Neuber and Henning Weimer to launch Austrian furniture, accessories, interior and corporate design company Destilat in 2006.

The company name emphasises the importance their practice places on the distilment of ideas. "We are convinced that the simplest idea is always the most difficult one. It requires lots of time to concentrate, to reduce, and to distil this first idea" – before the end result is realised, says Hatschenberger.

"Design is a process without beginning and without end, a field of immense curiosity, a depot of ideas. We move in this creative chaos, somewhere between the old and the new. We are in search of innovation that seems familiar to us, provocation that stirs us, functional seriousness that makes us laugh."

This is evident in the aptly named 'Kaos', a three-dimensional picture book shelf with a storage system that allows for books, inherently varying in size, to be organised in different ways. It plays on the idea of organised chaos and makes productive use of disorder.

Products evolve from inspiration rather than pre-conceived ideas.

"Sometimes design is also a matter of poetry and beauty. We'd better not forget that!" declares Hatschenberger.

As the name 'Dry Lake' implies, a dried-up salt lake inspires this crusty graphic patterned carpet and brings a touch of irony to a cosy living room.

It was a desire for flexibility in the living environment that inspired multi-functional light objects 'Grandma', 'Grandpa', 'Aunty' and 'Louise'.

A striking feature is the closely guarded technological mirrored glass innovation where form follows function. Without electricity, the works appear as a reflecting sculpture, when the light is turned on, the ornamentation which references bygone days, transcends to the here and now.

Churchill's broad seat and slanted backrest is a modern interpretation of the classic armchair and visually extends a welcoming invitation for a "comfortable chill out."

Destilat are keen to spread their wings and develop Australian distributors, thus enlarging their "angle of view" to the world market. Interested companies are invited to contact Destilat.

Destilat
(43 0) 699 1960 1012
office@destilat.at
destilat.at

Design: DEPOT of ideas



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"We move in this creative chaos, somewhere between the old and the new."



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