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DANGEROUS CAMPANA CREATIONS

Campana Brothers dazzle Monte-Carlo with 'Dangerous Luxury'

Lanie Goodman
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Diamonds may be forever, but these days, Brazilian designer duo Fernando and Humberto Campana are betting on bamboo. In their stunning new exhibition Dangerous Luxury at Monte-Carlo's glittery Salle des Arts, the marriage of precious metals and stones (think pink gold and brown diamonds) with native Brazilian golden grass (*capim dourado*) and bamboo was all part of the challenge.

This latest venture in crafted jewellery is a real showstopper, featuring 8 opulent one-off pieces ranging from delicate intricately woven earrings and a necklace to bracelets and a shimmering tiara.

"What is more important, the diamonds or the bamboo?" Humberto Campana asks with a smile. "By mixing the two, we try to give equal importance to both materials."

Dangerous Luxury marks one of the highlights of the razzle dazzle celebration of the 150-year anniversary of the Monte-Carlo SBM (Société des Bains de Mer), giving visitors a peek at the Campana's playful transformation of luxurious objects infused with the contemporary spirit of Brazil – with all of the pieces available for admirers to purchase for themselves.

In addition to the jewellery crafted in collaboration with jeweller Fabio Salini (Galleria O., Rome), the show features 20 works of furniture and decorative objects – many of which were custom-made with the glamorous legacy of Monte Carlo in mind.

"We are talking about a crossover between the Old World that is Europe and the artisanal traditions of Brazil," Fernando Campana explains. "In this show, we tried to recuperate the tradition of 15th century Italian bronze ornaments or marble and put that together with modest objects in Brazilian daily life, like razor blades, combs or little animals."

Among the quirky-meets-elegant furnishings, nothing could be more fitting for the princely heritage of Monaco than the Trono Armchair, inspired by thrones of primitive cultures, upholstered with shaggy white Kidassia goat fur, and exclusively handcrafted by Fendi in their in-house atelier.

Equally striking is the Gotimulo Cabinet, a tall cylindrical cabinet in olive wood and earth-toned Kidassia goat fur. "I wanted to give the impression of something very spiritual and magic, like a kind of shaman," says Fernando. "While making this in Rome, I worked like a hairdresser, cutting the fur to make it look almost human."

One of the most eye-catching sights in this dimly-lit gilded space is the graceful giant Giglio Lamp – a furry lily-shaped hanging light fixture that was inspired, says Fernando, by the whimsical butterfly chrysalis nests in Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*.

The animalist spirit also abounds in the Alligator Chair, made of a myriad of stuffed leather alligators, constructed by underprivileged women who work for a Brazilian NGO. "We brought the materials to our studio in Sao Paolo and sewed them together, one by one," says Humberto. "It took one month."
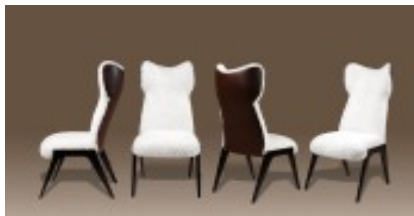
On a more sombre note is a stylish Black Rock table, inspired by the Roman Appian Way, made of two layers of Carrarra marble and bronze.

"What we enjoy is playing with different codes that create another reading of the furniture," says Fernando Campana. "Today, luxury is about recuperation, or reusing already existing materials from traditions. I think our work brings the concept of hope that everything can be transformed into a new life."

Runs until July 20; Place du Casino, Sporting d'Hiver

Find out more about the event (http://montecarlosbm.com/)

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