

Design Notes



Oscar Glottman brings furniture to life.



Just because Oscar Glottman's furniture pieces are works of art doesn't mean you can't sit on them.

COLUMN

The Glottman Cometh

Local boy Oscar Glottmann returns to Miami — with lively furniture

By Michelle Weinberg

The new Glottman showroom, located at 4141 N.E. Second Ave. in the epicenter of the Design District, resembles the set of the German expressionist film, *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Trippy angles and pathways snake through the space, divided by partition walls and floating curtains. Saturated colors and foil wallpaper contribute to the vertigo as you walk by ensembles of furnishings and accessories selected by architect Oscar Glottman.

Overall, the effect is delightful, stimulating and hypnotic. Rebelling against homogeneity in all things, each object in the showroom engages the user's imagination with a narrative. Each item has, at its core, "a certain level of uniqueness and poetry," according to Glottman. Whether it's a lamp featuring green grass, a glass sugar dispenser in the shape of a snowman or a seating element with designed-in pillows and floor coverings that can be reconfigured spontaneously by every owner, the storylines and sense of play bring the pieces to life.

Glottman's studio is the closest thing Miami has to uber-design retailer Moss in New York. It is a curated collection of distinctive furnishings and accessories for the home. In contrast to the hushed temple-like severity of Luminaire, and the precious, behind-glass, museum-like atmosphere promulgated by Moss, Glottman is more accessible and more vivacious. That sense of play is bolstered by a full-service design company that provides assistance to clients and designers at every phase of each project, from research and analysis

on property investment and development to complete architecture and interior design.

"Down to selecting the last teacup," said Dina Mitrani Ferrandis, Glottman's marketing director for the past two and a half years. "We are very committed to our clients, but we do it in a way that's informal, fun."

Studying abroad in London and Venice widened horizons considerably for this Miami Killian High School graduate, who subsequently received a scholarship to the University of Miami's School of Architecture. Colombian-born and Miami-bred,

Glottman attributes his ability to think freely and move across disciplines to his travels early in life. Versatility, the capacity to adapt to shifting realities and being unafraid of change have characterized Glottman's approach to his practice in a field that sometimes requires architects to defend a particular outlook to the point of being doctrinaire.

The manufacturers that Glottman assembled in the new showroom may ply their craft by hand or work with laser rapid prototyping technology, but their distinctive solutions to lighting or seating or storage or floor covering are meaningful and beautiful, rather than cookie-cutter. Developing creative relationships with the design studios represented at Glottman is a high priority. He believes anyone can enjoy the humanizing sensation of using something designed with wit or something intelligent.

"Design doesn't have to be elitist," he said. "It can be livable."

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It's clear by the prominently placed workstations in the showroom that the space doubles as a creative laboratory for Glottman. Citing an "energetic, very invested" team, both Mitrani and Glottman stressed their flexibility to create successful solutions for clients with a wide aesthetic range.

Glottman's first project in New York — an apartment at the deluxe 40 Bond building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron — featured design as streamlined as a yacht, sleek finishes, built-in storage and contrasting natural wood walls with lacquer and glass that achieved a dramatic "yin-yang" play of opposites.

Glottman will present two special exhibitions during Art Basel and Design Miami in early December. *Building with Light to Create Light*, a Glottman installation opening in the showroom Dec. 6, incorporates the works of three companies that create cutting-edge lighting design. Belgian company MGX is already represented in the showroom with sculptural, yet intimate, fixtures in white that call to mind natural coral formations, flower blossoms and beehives. A second exhibition, *The New German Design Generation*, planned for an undisclosed off-site location, will emphasize sensuality and comfort in German "seating culture" in rooms with such evocative titles as "Lava" and "Shiraz."

Glottman, a restless creative who recently took some time off to teach at the University of Arkansas, appears as comfortable in the realm of hand-held home accessories as he is discussing global tendencies in design culture. "It used to be that a cultural or provincial boundary made something special," he said. "Now it's less about political boundaries and more about the product." The designer, who isn't content to adhere to one architectural strategy, believes "the DNA of our society is already way beyond what the proponents of New Urbanism are trying to change. In the end, it's not about being regional, but being international." Even though this new showroom has just been unveiled, he hinted there are bigger things to come.

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