

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **LOOKS LIKE MAGIC!**

**Textile-Clay: a project about transforming a material into another one, while challenging traditional craft, by Jorge Penadés**

**Curated by Maria Cristina Didero**

**Produced by 5 Vie for Milan Design Week 2021**

**Via Cesare Correnti, 14**

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This year 5 Vie presents an experimental and strongly performative project by Spanish renowned designer Jorge Penadés, titled LOOKS LIKE MAGIC! and curated by Maria Cristina Didero.

As the nature of how we work and live is always changing, not to mention the unprecedented pandemic times that we have experienced, Penadés wanted to work on the idea of change and started working on the direction of modifying the very spirit of a singular material: textile waste. Penadés is challenging the chosen material and, at the same time he is challenging himself. This is actually not so much surprising as if you look at his OFICINA PENADÉS' website you can read at the very end of its homepage: OFICINA PENADÉS is an office for heterodox ideas.

How did we start this project? Jorge replies: "I'm interested in working with common materials but with a personal twist, that's why I try to make them myself. Structural Skin (2015) was a wooden-like material made out of leftovers and offcuts from the leather industry and this time I wanted to develop a clay-like material made from textile waste. It's like creating an updated version of those traditional materials but from resources that are already available instead of extracting them from nature."

So change, transformation became crucial, currently more than ever. It turns out to be incredibly important that we trial how we do things in another possible way, while looking for real alternative positions and different visions to face tomorrow's social, environmental and economical engagements - being them related to art, design or architecture or innovation at large. Our planet is screaming so it befalls natural and logical to look at sustainability before acting in any kind of creative field. It is possible to do this exercise by keeping an eye on sustainability, without repressing inventiveness and new visions to be encouraged. And even if there was a bubble of recycled, new materials made out of left-overs - which we salute as healthy! - we do believe that experimentations in this direction are never enough, and there is still a huge space for original and undiscovered developments. When Earth will benefit, we will benefit.

The project LOOKS LIKE MAGIC! not only combines man's imaginative power with actual technology, but it also involves a considerable amount of man-energy in acting and producing healthy and clean energy; the power of hands. We can use the word "exercise" as this vigorous exercise comes from real practice, research and experimentation, from trial and errors. It does not come out of the blue, it is not magic.

LOOKS LIKE MAGIC! comprises a performance by the designer Jorge Penadés himself as well as his team, and a performance by the sourced material. It is a mutual work, it is a team work. Considering that inspiration comes from working – and Penadés + team will be actually working pretty hard, hands on, live on site – the project LOOKS LIKE MAGIC! intends to emphasize the

transformation of a waste material of a certain typology (namely textile, collected from industrial laundries) into something totally different per DNA, texture and consistence, namely clay. Plus, finding the way to do it. What are the advantages regarding traditional clay? Penadés answers: “As I mentioned earlier, first, we do not need to extract anything from our planet, and on the other hand, we are reducing energy consumption to the minimum because we don’t need to fire and/or glaze the objects to transform the clay into a fully functioning material. Ceramic ovens waste a lot of energy due to the high temperatures that they need to reach. In our case, the Textile-Clay material just need some time to dry up and be usable.”

Specifically here, we are exploring and using textile powder or textile dust, and transform it into clay. But not only, we are also stretching the traditional idea of crafting both materials, textile and clay as well as exploring how much Penadés can exercise his imagination and body during the whole performance. This results actually in an unpredictable work-in-progress deed, which leaves a certain degree of fortuity and we enjoy it a lot! Where come the textile waste from? Penadés answers: “The textile waste comes from the deterioration or decay that textiles suffers when we wash them, specially in the spinning process of the washing machines and drying machines. Is not just about clothing but also beddings, tablecloth and so on. We source the textile waste from the filters of industrials dryers used at large laundry companies.”

As we are part of a whole, all of us should be focused to do our part. Recycling goes hand in hand with innovation, the exploration of ideas to scout new possible techniques and procedures to make and produce in a different way. To save our tomorrow. Here we combine this flame for a change with highlighting the force of human being – and his original twist, within this specific given context. Jorge Penadés plunges himself again into a project about rethinking a whole system, in order not only to explore new positions to the fullest, but also test himself.

#### **PERFORMATIVE EXHIBITION - how does it work:**

The more instinctive it is, the more imaginative it becomes, the more designed it becomes. The project starts in some sort of an empty space, a laboratory furnished with few examples of products tests, and the designer creating objects in different scale and typology, translating into real the process of transforming textile dust into Textile-Clay. And Textile- Clay into objects, thanks to the oldest method of working a dough, which is just like making bread.

Day after day the result is a room full of Textile-Clay objects of various shape, that altogether create collection on unique pieces in a unique language – from small accessories to bigger pieces of furniture such as stool to make an example. As mentioned, fortuity plays a relevant role on this exercise, but skills, dynamism and energy will do the same. It is the ultimate limited edition; all the pieces will be one of a kind, of course as produced in a peculiar and not replicable way. The utopian ideal scenario will be to begin the project with an empty space, and through the designer’s work (5 full days) filling up the room with objects and come back to the original state of emptiness by getting rid of them all by the end of the week. But it is not only about this; we would put on the table the idea of a project that starts from waste material, create a new one and leaving not left over at all.

## **THIS IS NOT MAGIC SO THIS IS HOW DO WE DO THAT!**

1. Sourcing the material: we collect the textile waste from industrial laundries. It's a sort of textile dust coming from their big dryers.
2. Cleaning process: we immerse the textile dust into bleach, leave it for a couple of hours and then we rinse it.
3. Drying: We just leave the wet textile on trays. This will be done in Madrid before the show in Milan.
4. Mixing: we mix the raw material with a binder that consist on a liquid starching agent, coming from the textile industry. We use different formulas depending on the properties that we want to achieve or the typology of object we want to make.
5. Shaping: we use different production/manufacturing methods depending on the objects: plates, "churros" (a sort of thick spaghetti made by rolling the mix ball with our hands), molds and countermolds, extrusions, freehand shapes, etc. Most of those process come from traditional clay-making.
6. Finish: we just need to wait until the final piece gets dry.

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**Milan, the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2021**