

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

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ACTS

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Urban Lighting Schemes

The emerging architect



1. Hip retailer Poleci's New York City flagship store and showroom called for crisp lines and a gallery feel.
2. A collaboration with Showtime yielded a 200-square-foot space meant to capture the spirit of modern media.
3. Warm, sophisticated materials and clever built-ins create an organic layout in this 3,000-square-foot New York City apartment.



IT TAKES A CERTAIN AMOUNT of audacity for a 26-year-old Italian architecture student to write a letter to Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron detailing the reasons they should hire him. Tenacity paid off, and Luca Andrisani, that plucky student, went to work at the famed Swiss firm right after receiving his M.Arch. from the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden (his undergraduate degree came from La Sapienza University in Rome).

Principal for the past six years of his own eponymous, New York City-based firm, Andrisani looks back at the two years he spent at Herzog & de Meuron with pride and some wistfulness. "The way they ran their firm, their quality of listening to what each person, both clients and employees, had to say, it's stayed with me," he says, admitting that while he has no regrets about leaving the firm to follow his dream of moving to New York City, his time there has informed his practice decisions on many levels. Not to mention the fact that the projects he worked on while a senior architect at Herzog & de Meuron – most notably Prada projects in Tokyo and Italy – gave him valuable experience in the realm of high-end retail environment design.

Andrisani admits that after flying high those two years, he wasn't quite ready for what was in store for him in New York, where he secured a position working for Rafael Viñoly Architects. "I was used to communicating with the partners every day," he says, "and not accustomed to working in a

big loft with hundreds of computers lined up. It was just a very different experience for me." And not one he wanted to continue. "For me, the goal was always to start my own firm," he says. "It was just a question of when."

After a year in the big loft, Andrisani went to work for Peter Marino Architect, a smallish firm known for its innovative approaches to luxury retail shops. "One of the great things about working with Peter was experimenting with different materials." For Andrisani, it was all part of the mix, and although he was in his element, he itched to run the show. "It was always the plan," he says.

Still ambitious, still tenacious, the 36-year-old does

design Luca Andrisani Architect



PRINCIPAL:
Luca Andrisani

LOCATION:
New York City

FOUNDED: 2004

DESIGN STAFF: 4

WORK HISTORY: Peter Marino Architect, 2003–06; Rafael Viñoly Architects, 2002–03; Herzog & de Meuron, 2000–02

EDUCATION: The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden, M.Arch., 1999; La Sapienza University, Rome, B.Arch., 1998

KEY COMPLETED PROJECTS: Platinum Salon, New York City, 2009; Poleci, Las Vegas, 2008; Poleci, New York City, 2007; Lalique, San Francisco, 2006; Kornfeld Residence, New York City, 2008; Erns-Jansen Residence, New York City, 2007

KEY CURRENT PROJECTS: Awadalla Residence, New York City, 2010; MKG Productions, New York City, 2010; Atlantic City Boardwalk Holocaust Memorial, unbuilt

WEB SITE:
lucaandrisanidesign.com

admit to a little more reserve in his practice and in his designs. "There is a place and a time for everything," he says, "and though I appreciate how little fear I have had in my career, I acknowledge that there was a bit of irresponsibility there, too. I don't regret it." And he shouldn't. His four-person firm has completed a number of retail and residential projects, including flagship stores for hip clothier Poleci in New York City and Las Vegas, a store for Laliq in San Francisco, and a number of New York City residential projects. His architectural aesthetic is clean and Minimal, but never "dry or empty. I appreciate contrasts between

materials – fragile with hard, then earthy. Juxtapositions are a good way to create emotion, I think." Andrisani also says his gutsy inclinations are less about his own ambition these days. "You tend to want to succeed alongside your clients," he says. That success, he says, starts with inspiration. "I'm inspired by travel, by constantly competing for projects, and by just always talking to people. The client is always inspiring, as well as everyone around me. I strive to run my practice like Jacque and Pierre run theirs. The ability to pay attention to people and never be closed to anything is always the highest standard. It's something to aspire to." *Ingrid Spencer*

work
Graypants



PRINCIPALS:

Seth Grizzle, Jon Gentry, Jonathan Junker

LOCATION: Seattle

FOUNDED: 2008

DESIGN STAFF: 6

EDUCATION: Grizzle:

Kent State University, B.Arch., 2005, and B.S. in Architecture, 2004;

Gentry: North Carolina State University, M.Arch., 2003; University of North Carolina at Charlotte, B.Arch., 2001; Junker: Kent State University, B.Arch., 2005, and B.S. in Architecture, 2004

KEY PROJECTS: Graypants live/work studio renovation; scrap lights; Slice Chair

KEY CURRENT PROJECTS:

Plywood Slice line; flat-pack design; sustainable infrastructure for smart buildings and products

WEB SITE: graypants.com



SITTING IN A SOFTLY LIT café in New York or San Francisco, you would probably never guess that the exotic light fixture you've been admiring used to be a cardboard box. Repurposing discarded items into something both useful and elegant is what inspires the resourceful designers of Graypants. "We love to use our hands and build stuff," enthuses Seth Grizzle, one of the founders of the Seattle-based design firm.

Graypants was born in 2008 when Grizzle, 28, and Jonathan Junker, 30, decided to realize a shared dream of creating their own design studio. They first met in the architecture program at Kent State University and have recently added their good friend Jon Gentry to their design team. The three now share a loft space in Seattle's Capitol Hill, where they live and work together, brainstorming and implementing new ideas. "We believe ideas shouldn't be treated preciously," suggests Junker. "Throw them out there and let them evolve. Let the ideas purify themselves."

After several years working in architecture firms, they all realized they were missing the process of designing, drawing, and using their hands to make useful things. In their off hours, they collected discarded materials and began to experiment with creative ways to repurpose them. Responding to a call for sustainable chairs for a local gallery exhibition, they crafted their entries from old boxes and newspapers. With the leftover chair scraps, they created what is now their popular line of scrap lights. Soon to follow were tables made



1. Cardboard for the DISC line of scrap lights is gathered from local businesses in Graypants' Seattle neighborhood.

2. This residence has a flexible program that can easily open up to accommodate large events and frequent visitors.

3. The Slice Chair, made of CNC-routed maple plywood with an ottoman that nests within, will be available for purchase this year.

from discarded shipping pallet slip sheets as well as chairs from plywood scraps. Junker says, "We never got together and said 'let's make a company about recycling.' You don't have a choice."

Both Gentry and Junker work for award-winning Seattle firm Olson Kundig Architects, while Grizzle operates the Graypants machine full-time. To those young designers lucky enough to have a job in this unpredictable economy, Gentry advises, "Have an outlet for your ideas, so you don't let things fall by the wayside at work." Agreeing with him about the pitfalls of day jobs, Junker adds, "Graypants is about inspiring people to do stuff on their own." Grizzle likes to sum up their collective approach to work with this quote from Persian poet Rumi: "Let the beauty of what you love be what you do." *Kurt Butterfield*

IMAGES: COURTESY SEAN WATSON (PORTRAIT); MARIUS NITA (1,3); GRAYPANTS (2)