

POPS OF COLOUR

Design studio Masquespacio created a quirky and colourful world for lifestyle brand Gnomo in Valencia, Spain.

Photo courtesy: LUIS BELTRAN



Light fixtures were specially created for the project.



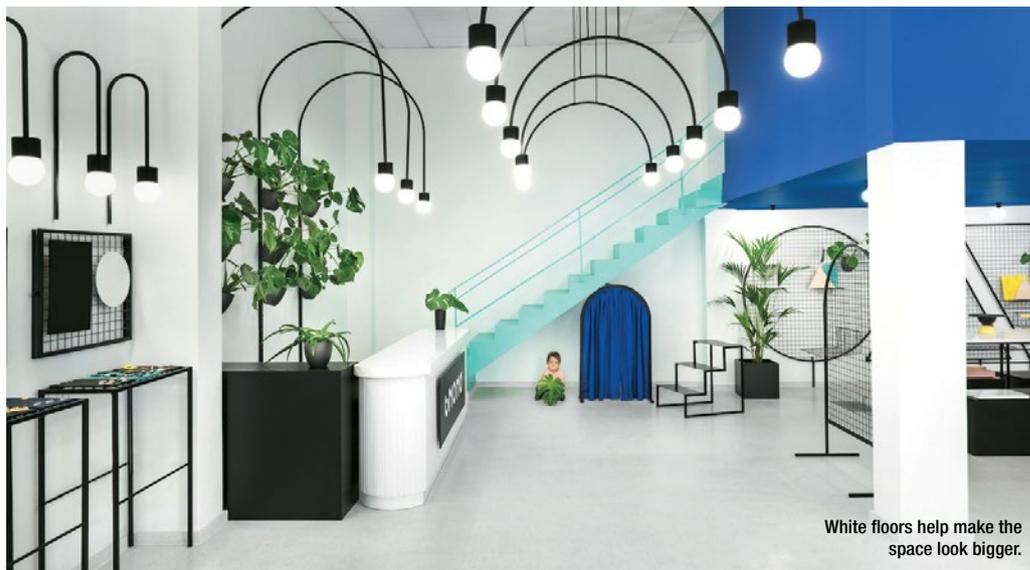
Display areas are planned so that they can be easily changed.

TIP
GRANITE WAS USED AS IT IS A MEDITERRANEAN 80s MATERIAL AND AT THE SAME TIME AN ACTUAL TREND.

Valencia-based creative studio Masquespacio has captured the vibrancy of the 1980's in the new Gnomo lifestyle store, situated in the renowned Valencian quarter Ruzafa. Gnomo was founded in 2010, and houses everything from fashion accessories, illustrations and clothes to plants. So when Masquespacio came on board as the design team, they had to invent a multi-functional space that reflected the brand's identity.

Masquespacio is an award winning creative consultancy created in 2010 by Ana Milena Hernández Palacios and Christophe Penasse. Awarded in 2016 with the "Massimo Dutti New Values" award by Architectural Digest Spain and the "Wave of the Future" award by Hospitality Design USA, the studio has worked on projects in several countries like Norway, USA, Germany and Spain. Ana Milena Hernández is the founder and creative director of Masquespacio. She is passionate about design and everything that has to do with it. Christophe Penasse, the co-founder and marketing director of Masquespacio, loves creating new concepts for his clients, giving greater importance to the design and identity of each brand.

For the Gnomo project, Masquespacio decided to maintain the eighties aspect of the space, adding a contemporary touch to it. A granite floor with a smooth colour was added, together with white walls and a touch of blue and green to create a cheerful and amusing feeling in the lifestyle shop. All the elements, excluding the counter desk, were designed by Masquespacio exclusively for Gnomo. A series of easy to move tables and display elements were custom-made with the intention to offer Gnomo the possibility of changing the product exhibition at any time. Ana Hernández, creative director of Masquespacio says, "Taking into account that Gnomo sells different kinds of objects from a wide set of brands, it was important to create a funny and happy feeling, but without creating a visual disorder." Talking about the product exhibition, she adds, "a series of tables and display elements that easy to move were custom-made. That way the intention was to offer Gnomo's store the possibility to change the product exhibition at any time depending on the actual type of products on sale."



White floors help make the space look bigger.



Potted-plants bring in a sense of freshness.



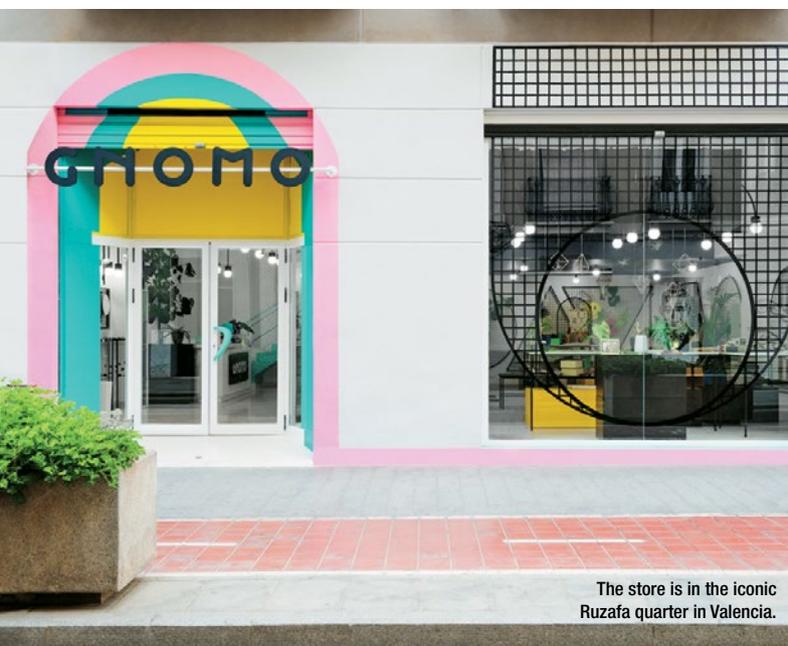
Splashes of energy come from the use of coloured cubes.



Ana Milena Hernández Palacios and Christophe Penasse, owners of Masquespacio



Stylish grill frames on the wall work as shelves as well.



The store is in the iconic Ruzafa quarter in Valencia.

ODE TO THE MEMPHIS MOVEMENT

For this project, they did not change anything from the original structure and were inspired by the street it was located in as well as the 80's vibe they wanted to create for the space. Ana says, "The idea was to create a multifunctional design that could be adapted to their exposition needs for each moment." An ode to the Memphis movement, the store is replete with humour-filled pop colours.

The Memphis design movement was founded by the late Ettore Sottsass on the 11th of December 1980. It was named 'Memphis' after the Bob Dylan song "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again." According to Paolo Feroletto from Italy Chronicles, "The Memphis design movement was a reaction to the slick, black, humourless design of the 1970's, with its minimalist design of typewriters, buildings, cameras, cars, and furniture; all of which were visually similar and, in the eyes of the Memphis group members, devoid of personality and individualism. In contrast, the Memphis movement produced bright, colourful, shocking pieces, which reflected the era perfectly. Whilst plenty of design-watchers at the time the movement began considered their products tasteless, they were ground-breaking."

DESIGN STORY

Looking at the entirety of the store, the visual story is one that echoes the movement and cheerfully brings out the sensibility of the era. The base of the store remains uncluttered and relies mostly on the white background in terms of the walls and granite flooring. But drama is added with touches of bold, happy colours in the form of blue, green and yellow that help introduce the element of humour and playfulness. "Trying to find the perfect mix between the design and the difficulty to work with new kind of goods every time is a challenge. We used granite as it is the perfect mix between a Mediterranean eighties material and at the same time an actual trend. The pop of colours help give a funny and humorous touch to the store", says Ana.

A highlight is the turquoise-painted, metal staircase leading upstairs to a room. The exterior walls of this space are painted a rich blue, which form a stark contrast to the white walls below. A bright yellow bench tactically placed amongst the black benches, surround the central display table near the store's entrance adding to the effect.

The store also has a lot of textures and layering. For example, the black metal, geometric shape framed net screens that function as shelves, the upside down "U" shaped chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and the rows of arched lamps against the walls make for a great visual. There are also strategically placed mirrors that create depth through their reflections. Inviting nature in are live potted plants, which both add a quirky touch as well as breathe life into the space. ■