

S P O O N

PHAIDON

Imagine a bedside table that doubles as an alarm clock: it rattles and vibrates, making everything on it shake (but not break) until the noise eventually wakes you up. There is also a 'weekend' version of the table, which has a removable felt muffler. Or how about a social light? It will glow only when spoken to and stays alight only when there is noise nearby. Or its counterpart, the anti-social light? This lamp will glow only when there is silence around it. These inventive designs are not the product of some experimental workshop, but the work of the London-based Greek designer Michael Anastassiades.

A graduate in civil engineering, Anastassiades studied industrial design at the Royal College of Art in London from 1991 to 1993. He then spent some years working for the innovative fashion designer Hussein Chalayan, as director of set design for his catwalk shows, before embarking on a career in product design in 1997. Predominantly an ideas man, he has devoted his talent to messing about with the function of furniture. Nothing in his collection is what it seems.

'It is very difficult to describe or sum up a particular style that represents me,' Anastassiades says, 'especially when a style's primary function is to serve the ideas behind an object.' This is Anastassiades' starting point: process and materials may be important, but their primary function is to express the concept. Symbiotic relationships between the object and the user are also a crucial part of his designs. When talking about the Social Light he explains that 'the user has to respect the Light's behaviour to receive its glow. It therefore becomes more like a companion.'

Although Anastassiades manufactures much of his work himself, he also works with London-based Babylon Design for the production of some pieces. His ambition is to mass-produce some of his key products. Among these is Message Cup (1998), an apparently simple cup that conceals a secret recording device. The cups can be used to exchange messages in the domestic environment. Each individual has his or her own cup in which other people can leave voice messages.

A collection of corner mirrors (2001) represents Anastassiades' latest foray into the world of unexpected design. Here he intentionally confuses and disorients the viewer by wrapping the looking glass around walls and ceilings, thereby distorting the reflection. LAURA HOUSELEY

1 Corner Mirror, 2001, silvered glass, wood, 114 x 40 x 4 cm, edition of five pieces.

> This mirror is a deliberate exercise in distortion; two flat materials have been curved to fit the shape of a 90-degree angle. The image of the surroundings that is projected is therefore distorted by the curvature in the glass, and the mirror becomes a source of intrigue rather than simply a functional object.

2 Ball Vases, 2001, silvered glass, 50 x ø 25 cm, Babylon Design.

> In this design, the traditional vase shape has been inverted and the reflective

qualities of the surface are used to enhance the illusion.

3 Message Cups, 1998, laminated birch ply, styrene, electronics, 6 x ø 8 cm, prototype.

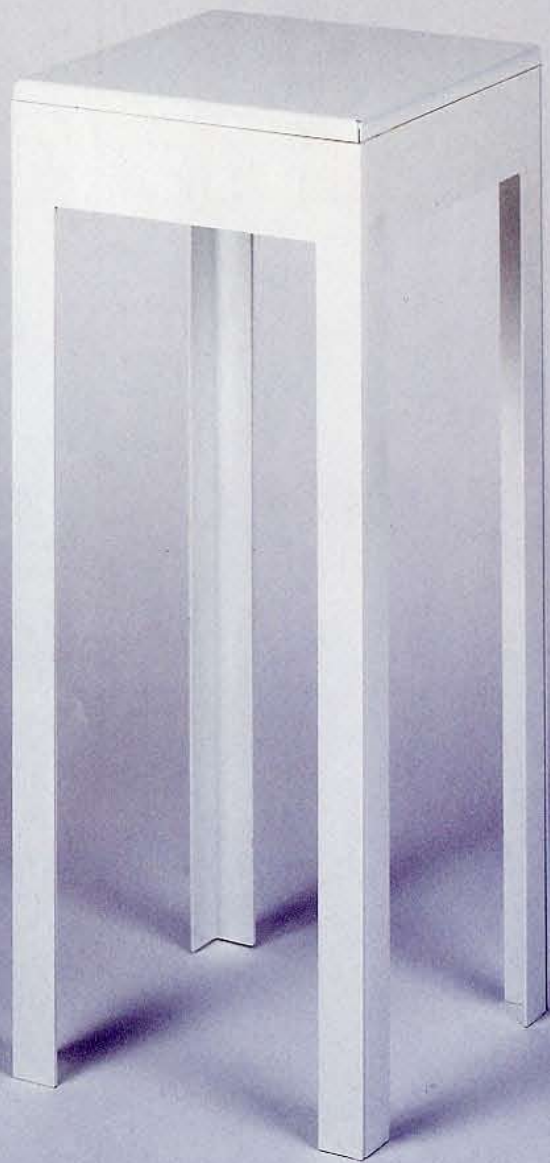
> These cups are used to exchange messages in a domestic environment. They are fitted with voice recording and playback equipment, allowing people to store messages for each other. The cups are activated by turning them from an upright to a face-down position.

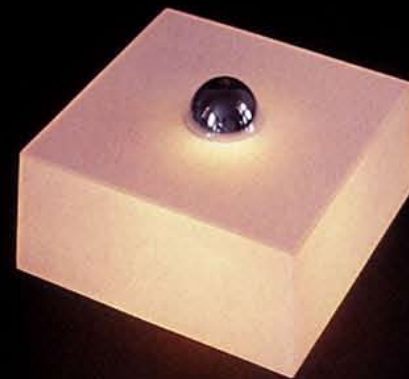
4 Mirror Chair, 1998, English oak, mirror, 90 x 45 x 45 cm, prototype.

> This whimsical design consists of two mutually exclusive functions: the mirror becomes redundant as soon as someone sits on the chair, and the chair cannot be used when someone is looking in the mirror.









1 Alarm Clock, 1998, enamelled metal, vibrating device, 45 x 20 x 20 cm, prototype. This is simultaneously a bedside table and an alarm clock with a difference. When the timing device situated beneath the tabletop goes off, instead of a conventional ringing alarm, the whole table starts vibrating, rocking on its two uneven pairs of legs.

2 Weekend, table, 1998, tubular metal frame, removable felt suit, 45 x 35 x 35 cm, prototype.
 › This bedside table is a progression from the alarm-table design; the felt cover

muffles the vibration of the table, allowing a good night's sleep.

3 Sitooteries, 2000, fibreglass, resin, fountain 160 x ø 35 cm, stool 42 x ø 40 cm, prototype for Belsay Hall, Northumberland.
 › The taller of these two white columns is a fountain. The adjacent stool is positioned so that the sitter's eyes capture the perfect view of the veil of water brimming over the concave bowl. The simplicity of these designs provides a great contrast to the ornamental garden.

4 Box Light, 1998, acrylic fitting, silvered bulb, 15 x 23 x 23 cm, Babylon Design.
 › This is a light within a box. The silver-tipped bulb peeping out at the top spreads light through the main body of the design, creating an even, gentle glow.

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