

FRAME

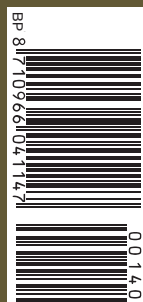
THE NEXT SPACE

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GUIDING LIGHT

A flexible, modular lighting system built on the simplicity of lines and grids, Coordinates by Michael Anastassiades for Flos feels like the perfect collection for a new world order.

Words Shonquis Moreno

‘Coordinates can live in a small house to illuminate a table or sofa or become a scenographic installation in a public space’

There’s something comforting about geometry and the coordinates that locate objects in space, reassuring us that we will eventually find our way. After a year of quarantine – the pandemic having burned one full year to the ground, generating so much change so fast at a global scale – it’s overwhelming to try to imagine what comes next: at home, in the office and the café and, not least, throughout the design industry. This is one of the reasons that Flos’s 2020 release of the Coordinates lighting system by London-based creative Michael Anastassiades feels so timely.

Anastassiades designed the precursor of this three-dimensional grid-based lighting collection for Isay Weinfeld’s 2018 renovation of the Four Seasons restaurant in New York City. By last year, Flos had translated it into an extensively modular retail product with both standard and custom options. The result is slender but solid, minimal yet sculptural, irreducible while at the same time bespoke. And without any flaps, folds or flourishes to aid in fomite transmission, Coordinates looks and feels like lighting for any time but, in particular, for this dim but slowly brightening moment.

As the world starts over again at, as they say, square one, it feels somehow right to begin with a grid: Coordinates was inspired by the mathematical precision of the Cartesian grid and consists of horizontal and vertical LED strip lighting that, when interlocked, forms illuminated 3D grids of varying complexity. This interlocking arrangement of simple straight pieces – the linearity for which Anastassiades has become so well-known over the course of his almost 30-year career – means that it can be offered in an array of set configurations suited to a broad spectrum of environments and programmes. These include four pendant chandeliers of varying

dimensions, three ceiling-mounted fixtures available in two lengths to fit either ordinary or high ceilings, two wall light models, a floor lamp comprising two tall bars that can be set at various angles, and a repeatable module that can be suspended from or mounted to the ceiling to generate more complex installations for larger spaces. ‘Coordinates is the crystalline expression of the way Flos thinks, designs and creates uniqueness in the world of lighting,’ says Barbara Corti, the company’s chief digital officer and international marketing director. ‘Coordinates is a product that in its simplicity and purity incorporates elements that give a unique expressive richness. Coordinates can live in a small house to illuminate a table or sofa or become a scenographic installation in a public space, such as a hotel or restaurant, while maintaining its allure. It has the ability to emanate beauty while simultaneously connecting with different spaces and briefs.’

Born in Cyprus and trained in civil engineering with a Master’s degree in Industrial Design from London’s Royal College of Art, Anastassiades has designed eight collections for Flos. During an interview for the brand, he once explained: ‘When designing a light, I always start from the glow. I never differentiate between a light I design for a place of worship or simply for a home.’ This approach is apparent in his products, which, famous for their sculptural minimalism, tend to look as well in a palace as in a warehouse or a cave. This may be because his work often blurs the line between fine art and design, creating unexpected interest from the most simple of forms: straight lines.

A series of planes built from said straight lines, the Coordinates collection is fashioned from extruded aluminium with an anodized finish that frames the light with a burnished glow. Generating a big impact

Thanks to its interlocking arrangement of simple linear pieces, Coordinates comes in an array of set configurations – from pendant chandeliers to wall- and ceiling-mounted fixtures to a floor lamp – suited to a broad spectrum of environments and programmes.

with a light touch, the collection comprises component parts that can be decreased or multiplied, serving as the jewellery of a room or as an entire gown. When something so minimal is this modular, it is easily adapted to hybrid environments, as well, fitting into spaces ranging from retail to hospitality and home office to corporate office. ‘Spaces and the ways in which they are lived are changing,’ says Corti. ‘We need flexible spaces, hybrid ways in which the old logic is mixed up: home, office, sharing spaces, public spaces. Progressively we will return to the normality of life, but it will be necessary to welcome new habits, new logics, into projects.’

Indeed, Covid-19 has meant that the value of crossover products has just shot up. Worldwide, for example, the pandemic has largely proven the success of working from home: according to an Upwork survey, 25 per cent of American employees will be working remotely in 2021. By 2025, 36 million Americans are expected to be working remotely, an 85 per cent increase over pre-pandemic numbers. This means that residences will increasingly support workspace while the office finds new value in its role as social, collaborative space. Coordinates’ marriage of Platonic simplicity with complex customizability makes it fit for both. It can be the background or the foreground, simultaneously the canvas and the painting. For some, Coordinates’ minimalism doesn’t just suggest a rigorous form of conceptual purity, but it also hints at the hygienic. It looks like architecture *and* art. It looks neither organic nor synthetic because, mostly, it looks like light, captured and mapped. ●

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