

Otium

illuminate & accessorize

By Kate Yule

Classically trained in the fine arts at Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, D.C., Thomas Fuchs brings his passion for furnishings and decorative arts to the forefront with both of his home furnishings collections. Fuchs also trained at the Art Students League and Academy of Design in New York City.

Fuchs's interest in the decorative arts and furnishings led him to pursue a career with C.G. Sloan & Co., a fine arts auction house in Washington, D.C. He later joined Butterfield & Butterfield, another premier auction house located in San Francisco, as a furniture specialist and appraiser.

When Fuchs left the auction industry to become a private dealer, he moved to Los Angeles and helped Craig Wright launch the Quatrain furniture line. Fuchs's passion for classic scale and proportion combined with surprising materials, motifs and forms was evident and the collection's success was enough to draw the attention of Donghia, his next employer. Fuchs served as the director of design development for Donghia's furniture and decorative arts lines before leaving to launch his own signature line.

Otium, Fuchs's trade-only line of stunning neoclassical glass lamps, vases and candlesticks, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. His pieces can be found in a variety of luxury locations, including The Ritz-Carlton in Miami as well as the Bellagio and Venetian hotels in Las Vegas. In addition to adding pieces to Otium, Fuchs launched Thomas Fuchs Creative, a retail tabletop line in 2011 and is currently working in collaboration with Fürstenberg Porcelain on a line of dinnerware and vases, which will be released in 2013.

Fuchs, owner and lead designer for Otium, recently took the time to share some insight on Otium and his other endeavors with *DTM*.



Thomas Fuchs
Owner / Lead Designer

How do you juggle the demands of a to-the-trade collection and retail collection along with collaborations with other designers?

As a designer I want to design 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So I welcome the demand with great enthusiasm. It helps that I have a great team to help me sell, market and keep the back room running.

What prompted you to launch Otium? Why did you select Otium as the name?

I launched Otium because I love glass and I love lighting and was able to marry this love with the tradition of working with the maestros of Murano.

Otium literally means artistic leisure or a kind of period when you can daydream in Latin. It is a beautiful word in meaning as well as visually.



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Do you have plans to offer additional product types as part of the Otium line in the future?

The Otium collection will grow and expand as long as I can hold a pencil to draw. We have two fun new chandeliers in development for Otium, which I am completing development of when I return to the factory this month. We are also working on a huge Butterfly-inspired ceiling fixture for a commercial space in Boston. We continually work on new custom designs with designers as well expand the existing collection. I also work on designs just to feed my own whimsy and to see ideas that are in my mind become reality — this is how most of our collection comes about.

How did the creation of the Aix Chandelier come about?

The Aix was one of the most difficult of my creations to realize but the easiest to conceptualize. In the Cathedral in Aix, there is a huge tromp l'oeil painting on the alter of the cathedral. The painting is of a long hallway with huge glass chandeliers lining it. I merely just made the chandelier in the painting a reality. It worked beautifully.

Where can our readers view your products?

For Otium, we have showrooms all over the U.S. that can be located on our Web site. The same is true for Thomas Fuchs Creative. We are continually getting requests for retailers all over the U.S. as well as internationally to carry the designs.

Who designs the pieces for Otium? Where does the designer look for inspiration?

I am the lead designer. My inspiration comes from my classical training and how to use that with modern cues.



You helped create the Quatrain furniture collection with Craig Wright. How did this experience help prepare you to launch your own trade-only lighting and accessory line?

For the first three years at Quatrain I was the only one working there. So I had no other choice but to do and learn every aspect of a to-the-trade business. This made me a better boss and

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design director at Donghia where my sourcing and lighting skills developed further. This combined knowledge gave me the structure contacts and understanding I needed to launch my own line.

What prompted you to start both a retail line and a trade-only brand?

Thomas Fuchs Creative started as a way to make my designs attainable. Before Thomas Fuchs Creative my designs were only available exclusively to designers and architects. I love having my designs easily acquired.

Do you have a favorite piece from one of your Otium or Thomas Fuchs Creative collections?

I use one of my new skull drinking glasses all day and night. I guess I have become attached to him.

Can you tell our readers about your experiences writing and illustrating “The Pattern Book of Lighting” for Bauer and Dean Publishers?

Working with my publisher Bauer & Dean has been wonderful. They are supportive, encouraging and honest, which is critical. Writing is great — it makes me introspective and feeds my soul by reminding me that I do have a wealth of information to share. Drawing is an activity that takes me away.

What does the future hold for Thomas Fuchs, Otium and Thomas Fuchs Creative?

The future holds great things! I am lucky to have collaborations in the works with top European legendary brands for the retail arm of our business as well as growing my to-the-trade designs. We are also developing ways to give back to the design community through charity and apprenticeship that hopefully will manifest next year. D_T

Page 23: This dining room features an Otium Chandelier and an assortment of glasses from Thomas Fuchs Creative's Ombre, Roly Poly, Surface and Bottoms-Up Collections; Page 24: This colorful living room features the Balustra Lamp in clear by Otium as well as an assortment of Thomas Fuchs Creative barware, including the Skull Marble Champagne Bucket, Metal Tong with Skull, Skull Coasters and Glasses, and a macabre Femur Bone Stirrer; Page 25 top (left to right): The Daphne Lamp from Otium is hand-crafted from blown Murano glass, the sides of the lamp are decorated with glass rods in varying lengths. This lamp is available in three colors; Otium's Evviva Lamp is crafted from hand-blown Murano glass. The thick band of glass wrapped around the base is poked and pinched before the glass cools creating a whimsical look; Bottom: The Luna Lamp is a flattened spherical form lamp with thin threads of glass spun around the base giving the illusion of movement. The Luna Lamp is available in three colors; Left top: Thomas Fuchs Creative marble candlesticks sitting atop an original John Dickenson African table; Bottom: A close-up of some of Thomas Fuchs Creative's glassware, including an Ombre glass and a Skull glass — one of Fuchs's favorite pieces.