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A professional portrait of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a white, textured blazer with gold buttons and a matching skirt. Her arms are crossed, and she has dark nail polish. She is wearing a ring on her left hand and a bracelet on her right wrist. The background is a blurred cityscape with buildings and a clear sky.

Kristina Ivanović

We're introducing you: Kristina Ivanović
DIVNA DESIGN

I CREATE A STYLE THAT IS EVERLASTING

Kristina Ivanović is a young and ambitious interior designer, applied artist, founder and director of the DIVNA DESIGN company. Even if you don't know her, when you see her work, you feel sophistication of an artist and a remarkable aesthetic level. The authenticity of the DIVNA DESIGN project is based on achieving balance between simplicity and sophistication, symmetry and asymmetry, spatial cleanliness, light and fulfillment. Whether it's about a tasked style or project assignment, Kristina's got her "answer" - she says she builds her style still with new experiences, but her designer "handwriting" is recognizable because common denominators for her project are transparency, soft colors, mix of the old and new, and unique settings filled with happiness

Text: Sanja Golubović

Kristina Ivanović was born in Podgorica, grew up in Kotor, and started developing her style and artistic sensibility during her studies in Belgrade at the *Faculty of Arts and Design*, and then in Milan, at the *University Politecnico di Milano*. After her graduation, she advanced her knowledge at some of the leading firms in Podgorica, Belgrade and New York. She decided to apply remarkable experiences and knowledge acquired right at the beginning of her career, in centers which dictate global trends in design, to her own studio **DIVNA DESIGN** which she founded in 2019. At 27, she started a solo design career based on luxurious residential, business, and catering facilities.

Due to her great love for art, she often decorates interiors with unique designer pieces too. She likes playing with contrasts, so in her projects one can find a modern detail perfectly combined with a classic one, and all of that is perfectly fit into a seducing harmony and calls for an exciting design travel.

Kristina's design evolution is remarkable. The **DIVNA DESIGN** studio can already boast furnishing many luxurious residential facilities.

Through her work, Kristina defines modernity as a concept which stays close to the past, and it pervades it. She sometimes designs something peaceful, something exotic, and always with the same goal, as she likes to put it – to create interiors with a soul, awakening the senses, and creating a story which is everlasting

In November 2021, Kristina had the honor to participate in the NYC&DESIGN festival, where she presented one of her newer projects. It's about a luxurious interior boutique project in Podgorica.

"Finding the name DIVNA DESIGN among those who've always been role models for you is a huge success for a young person from Montenegro. I know I'm on the right track when I saw DIVNA DESIGN among globally known designer names – said Kristina regarding this event, which is truly representative in this young designer's already rich resume. By all accounts, she has a serious career ahead of her, and her approach to work is – serious.

As the crown jewel of my quality work, DIVNA DESIGN is opening the doors of its new work place in downtown Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro.

Work space DIVNA DESIGN is designed as an exhibition space where pieces of furniture are on display, such as a mini bar, sofa, rug, desktop, and library with the DIVNA DESIGN signature.

When and how did you fall in love with your career?

I fell in love with it long before I started doing it. Interior design was destined and logical to me. **Since I was a kid, I've liked drawing. I'd often glue objects onto my drawings, and thus created a third dimension. At home, we had magazines such as Art&Decoration.** I remember I used to like going through them and imagining the clients from the magazine I would show houses to, and I would explain why they're beautiful and why they should be bought. I attended an art section, and played the piano. I went to museums with my mom and visited cultural and historical landmarks. I fell in love with art and design without even being aware of it.

...Elements that aren't a trend, but style

DIVNA DESIGN offers a service of customized design and creating interiors based on details which perfectly fit their context, clients' needs, and which will endure the test of time. "That's exactly what I go by in each of my projects. The foundation of all my projects are elements which aren't a trend, but a style. I try to reconcile opposite styles, preserve the tradition from oblivion by supporting it with the modern, that is, I interpret the tradition in a modern way"

– Kristina explains to us



I like that you chose the right word – career. When you do any type of creative work, you also live it, without working hours. And it's then when it becomes, like you put it, a career, not work.

How did you come to the decision to establish your firm DIVNA DESIGN and create your own brand, so young and courageous?

I've always dreamed of a solo career and being the founder of a company. After five years of improving my knowledge at one of the leading bureaus dealing with interior design, I felt enough self-confidence to contribute to the design scene with acquired knowledge and experience and by establishing the firm DIVNA DESIGN, and therefore, satisfying an increasing demand for furnishing high-end interiors.

According to you, what's the difference between a good and a great design?

A good design is one that makes you feel alright, but in the end, you neither remember it nor does it trigger an emotion in you. You notice a bad design right away. And a great design is one that inspires you and makes you happy. It's the design where you keep finding something new. You constantly enjoy it whether it's about a product or space. It makes you keep coming back to it or staying with it.

What's your biggest inspiration in work? And the challenge?

I think about my projects most days, and I can be inspired at any moment.



If I don't have my notebook, I write down a sudden idea or explosion of creativity in my phone.

I'm inspired by each new project and client, as well as by tasks I need to provide an answer to. Each project is also a new learning experience. I learn from my clients, and at the end of every project, I'm richer from a new experience.

The fact that there's always something new is inspiring. Thus, reaching finality in this work is almost impossible.

I like that every day my job is different and very dynamic. If things were static,

I wouldn't be this happy. ***I like to spend my free time by getting informed about new developments in the world of art, culture, and global business. I do that by traveling and reading. It all inspires me and makes me truly happy.*** I believe it's key to my work and that's exactly the reason why people choose DIVNA DESIGN, which they always come back to. ***The biggest challenge is time management, which requires good organization because my time is always split between several areas of focus and different deadlines.*** I learned that the key to good

organization is to surround yourself with people you share the same vision of running a business with. Besides, I'm a big creator of inventories and lists. Every week I make a list of goals I want to achieve in the following week and I change it, if necessary. I mostly add new stuff to do.

When do you feel most satisfied in your work? What occasion and at what stage of work?

Creating something not just beautiful but functional and comfortable is a process. I enjoy that process from the start to finish. **Turning something what was a thought or idea into a tangible matter interwoven with someone's wishes, and your imagination gives me great pleasure every day.** It's an indescribable feeling to see something which was once your idea or thought turned into action, and at the end there's a satisfied client. My greatest happiness is a happy and satisfied client who, by the end of a project, often becomes my friend too. It's one more perk of this job. You get to meet many great people during work.

Today, every interior segment has to be functional without losing aesthetics. Is it sometimes hard to harmonize aesthetics and functionality?

As a designer, I need to create something which functions. I think of it as something which would fit the environment. While perhaps, for an artist, there's freedom of creating something that simply exists on its own, a good design has to have a purpose above all, and then beauty. **Interior design is like an art installation, but functional. Blending the pretty and functional is a process which often isn't easy, but always inspiring.**

How would you describe your own interior "signature"?

The more I acquire knowledge and experience, the more my style changes. Therefore, I acquire more self-confidence to take on bigger risks at my work. My style is always evolving, so it's impossible to define it precisely. In the end, it's always defined by my client's personal style. However, common denominators for my projects are transparency, soft colors, and mix of the old and new. In my projects, one can often find decorative beading, wallpapers, pastel colors, as



well as unusual twists and turns, such as modern paintings in a classic interior or classic chandeliers in a completely modern surrounding. **I love to interpret classic through modern materials. I also love to spice up a logical turn of events with an interesting materialization and unexpected selection of colors.** Every project of mine has something unique, which I don't repeat. Besides, I try to rekindle every interior with some designer pieces and artwork that will make an interior unique.

You've been given a project design, budget, place and deadline by a client. How do you manage to give your personal signature to projects you work on? I don't put my work into frameworks of one style, but frameworks of wishes and lifestyles of each individual client. I interpret my design story and creativity through every project. For that reason, every interior becomes authentic and unique.

What project of yours, a professional endeavor, are you most proud of (or which one was the most challenging project you've worked on and why)?

It'll sound like a cliché, but I'm very proud of every project. Every project has its story. I approach every interior project or design of a piece of furniture with the same manner of research and enthusiasm. Each of them individually has a special meaning for me, because each of them has an important role in my design evolution and story I want to tell. The wish and passion I cherish in design keep rein-

spiring me and broadening the horizons of the DIVNA DESIGN brand.

What can an investor, who's decided to work with you, that is DIVNA DESIGN studio, expect? What's your work motto and work philosophy?

The secret of well-thought out interior is a careful listening to the lifestyles, habits, and wishes of clients, but also adjusting to the space and function it should have, as well as its' location. Every interior has to be special and unique and so does the client the design is being created for. Services of designing the interior or furniture mean elaboration of the idea, 3D modeling and visualization, as well detailed technical documentation of the project. The final segment of the service refers to executing and monitoring the final works on site. Shortly, the studio offers tailored design solutions, and it shapes client's wishes and puts them into practice.

You've got such a great taste for clothes, too. Do you follow developments in the fashion world or do you think that your taste is inherited?

I do aesthetics, so it's kind of expected to love fashion design, too. I follow trends, but not blindly. On a certain day I want to be a combination of vivid colors and prints, and on another day, I want to enjoy a more elegant combination. It's more a matter of emotion and mood. The interiors I design usually match the colors of my clothing combination and it's cute to me. **When I have time, I like to design some clothing items for myself too.**