

Isay Weinfeld celebrates 40 years and a new monograph with an exhibition at Espasso, New York

DESIGN / 12 NOV 2013 / BY PEI-RU KEH



The exhibition marks the launch of a new monograph, published by BEI Editora, which takes an in-depth look into 17 of Weinfeld's projects from 2000 to 2011, and includes photographs and design drawings that are not displayed in the exhibition

HIDE CAPTION START 6 / 11

Most designers who are invited to stage a retrospective of their work opt for a journey back through time, displaying drawings, models and maquettes that might never have been shown before. Not Isay Weinfeld. The Brazilian architect-cum-designer chose to celebrate the 40th birthday of his eponymous practice and the US launch of his third monograph with a daring debut exhibition of two furniture pieces and a series of 13 new films, which opens at Espasso in New York this week.

The beginning-and-end connotations of the show's title, 'A to Z', is made all the more subversive with the pieces on show. In a specially constructed chamber within Espasso's loft space, Weinfeld has installed an architectural cradle, made from sustainably forested Tauri Branco wood from Brazil with radiating rails, quilted white bedding and an attached, three-legged mobile in a painted black room. In an adjoining room, painted white, Weinfeld presents the other end of the spectrum - a minimalist coffin, complete with matching bier, crafted from the same materials and finished with six looped rope handles for bearing it.

During our exclusive sneak peek of the show, the softly-spoken Weinfeld recounted, 'When the publisher decided to launch the book, people suggested that I take the opportunity to show all my work in different areas during the last 40 years [in the show]. I went home and said to myself, "This is not me". I am not the kind of guy to show myself off in this city.'

Instead he took a different tack. 'I decided to think of something that would really represent who I am. This installation is very precise, concise and reveals a lot about me because it's simple, strong, critical, and has humour - key elements in my life.'

The diptych, which was just presented at the prestigious Galeria Luisa Strina in Weinfeld's hometown of São Paulo last month, is accompanied by the premiere of 13 one-minute films. Directed by the architect, each is a portrait of a different Isay Weinfeld project, set to music that symbolises a moment in its realisation. 'I was a filmmaker at the beginning of my career, as well as an architect, so it's a return in another way, but mixes architecture, cinema and my big passion, music.' The full series of forty films will be launched at the end of the year via a mobile app.

There is also the book, of course. Published by BEI Editora, the tome takes an in-depth look into 17 projects from 2000 to 2011, and includes the photographs and design drawings that are not displayed in the exhibition.