

Best Multidisciplinary Design & Research Office - Athens

BllendDesign is a multidisciplinary design and research office developing unique identities in the fields of architecture, landscape, interiors, furniture, and lighting design. In light of the firm's extraordinary awards success, we take a closer look.

BllendDesign has acquired a reputation working in residential properties and commercial branded environments, which in their majority have received international distinctions, including the Gold International A' Design Award for the Agora Floreasca Urban Theory Leisure Mall in Bucharest, and Europe's Best Leisure Interior for Rook Cafe Delicatessen, a food and beverage space that was developed in a site of archaeological interest and roots in Greece.

Co-Founder and Design & Research Director, Helen Brasinika comments, "We feel blessed and very proud that our work has received wide and international recognition, bearing the credentials of very prestigious and established international design competitions."

From the very beginning, BllendDesign has embraced an understanding of the enormous impact a building and its surrounding environment can have on life and wellbeing. Every project it undertakes therefore starts from the axiom of 'people first', and by incorporating research-informed data, the team aims to bring or realign the balance of all the elements that constitute the surrounding environment.

Helen Brasinika was born in Greece, but lived abroad for many years, from which she gained an insight into the multi-cultural and educational backgrounds of different continents and infused them into her approach towards design and lifestyle in general. This includes the far east and its holistic approach to every organism, playing a vital role in treating the natural and man-made environment from an organic perspective. Helen and the team choose to apply this approach in every phase of the design process, allowing elements from various disciplines to be incorporated in order to achieve the client's visions and goals without compromising on the company's social mission.

The focus of BllendDesign gradually developed from small scale residential and office projects in Attiki and Athens, to getting commissioned for upper scale and demanding projects that require expertise and know-how in the healthcare, hospitality, and commercial sectors all over Greece. During the past eight years, it has expanded abroad by getting involved in the design, research, execution, and project management



for very demanding commercial and residential projects in Bulgaria, Bucharest, and Emirates.

Speaking of this journey, Helen says, "It is a transforming and sometimes painful evolution that demands diligence, focus, daily education to remain knowledgeable, efficiency, and effectiveness in a rapidly evolving and competitive sector.

"When I say painful, I mean that you constantly have to try to find balances, realign, negotiate, and keep a healthy distance in order to give the best at work, and focus on family as well. Travel and cultural immersion is my way of recharging inspiration 'powerbacks'."

Every time the team begins a new project, it sparks inspiration and a determination to work hard in order to deliver an architecture project that is always better than the last. Helen states, "We work hard in order to give our best design concept and essence, and we love every project we have designed so far, no matter how big or small."

BllendDesign is currently involved in projects within urban regeneration and residential design in Greece and Bucharest, as well as hospitality design and wellness. The focus, as always, is on sustainability, adaptive re-use, and energy efficiency, innovation, and resilience. All projects follow a people-first initiative, implementing experiential data, material, and technology innovation, while balancing the relationship with

the natural and built environment. The main aim is to create spaces that will contribute to empowering a state of wellbeing in peoples' daily lives. And projects certainly come with their challenges, namely the covid-19 pandemic, when the team had to maintain high standards despite the fluctuating market prices, material availability, and human workforce shortage.

The positive aspect of this disruptive period, however, turned out to be that people became more aware of their surroundings and their strong impact on their daily balance and wellbeing. Healthy air, lighting and safety have gained an important place in spatial design, whether it involves residential, commercial, or hospitality projects. For BllendDesign, the pandemic determined the need to stay committed and dedicated to its initial focus on human-centred design of resilient spaces.

Indeed, the team maintained those high standards, having recently designed two luxury residential projects in Athens Southern Suburbs, Varkiza and Vouliagmeni. The projects currently at the construction and final execution drawings phase, incorporated intelligent management of LED lighting with occupancy sensors which adjust the intensity of the lighting according to the natural light flowing into the space and the presence or movement of people. Natural vegetation was chosen, always supported by water supply systems and exploitation of rainwater with hidden tanks for water collection, management and fire extinguishing options in case of emergency. This approach aims to restore the human relationship with the natural environment and the biorhythms of health and wellbeing, in a setting that nurtures safety, balance and security.

Another project that the team is proud of completing is its award-winning Agora Floreasca Urban Theory, a leisure mall in Bucharest which is focused on creating a laid-back and relaxed atmosphere for people to enjoy food and beverages, alongside physical and mind rejuvenation all day long. The mall officially opened to the public just before the covid outbreak. Helen gives an insight into what went into the project: "We really think the meticulous attention to detail, use of innovative and certified products, successful lighting design, and focus on people and how they experience their surrounding environment in order to maximise their benefit was really successful. We established the place as a meeting spot that emits a sense of security, safety, and a relaxed, ambient environment that enables people to relax and connect."

Now more than ever, BllendDesign values the need to create spaces that live and evolve together with their inhabitants, and the team will continue its strong effort in this direction. All of its current and future projects will follow the path of designing spaces that take responsibility towards contributing and forging the right circumstances for occupants to achieve balance and wellbeing at in their homes, at work, and in recreation environments. All of this cannot be achieved without studying nature and incorporating the lessons learn so far to inform better design.

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