

Asteriskos Designs for Concert Stages & Tom Wiscombe

Design and fabrication work appears on Jimmy Fallon and in L.A.'s MoCA

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(Phoenix)— Have you ever wondered where concert set designs come from or what it would be like to work with Tom Wiscombe? Ask Asteriskos, a Phoenix-based architectural design and digital fabrication studio founded a year ago by SCI-Arch graduates Mikhail M. Gladchenko and Keegan D. Quick. Their recent set design for Yeasayer was featured on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*. Now it's gone international. It looks like iceberg fractals radiant with lasers. Its mirrored surfaces reflect never-repeating digital imagery that changes according to the audience's movements. Quick helped design the paper models made by New York-based Casey Reas, concert designer with the band Yeasayer, and Chris Lasch, designer, and then digitally fabricated the works of concert stage art to yield <https://vimeo.com/65269804> .

"This thing goes to a new venue every night so it has to be rapidly deployable and super lightweight. Every venue uses different hands to construct the set," says Quick. "Things get broken, like the design's mirrors. Anticipating that scenario, we fabricated prepackaged replacement parts. Now, if something does break the studio hands can just look up the number of the piece and replace it exactly how it's supposed to be."

Easier installation

Typically, once pieces for a custom design are delivered to a construction site or moved from one concert venue to another, there's no diagram to explain the installation. Asteriskos removes the guesswork. The studio labels the panels for easy installation, minimizing confusion and problems, and shrinking yet more costs for the client—not just for concert designs but for all of its interior design and architectural clients.

Para-what?

Clients like **Tom Wiscombe**, who enlisted Asteriskos to help with his piece for L.A. MoCA's [Sculpturalism](#) exhibit, do seek the studio for its adaptability to design styles. But it's the use of parametric design technology and digital fabrication techniques that keeps them coming back.

Gladchenko and Quick can design concert stages or 400 individually patterned wall panels using parametric technology, then materialize them in wood, plastics, metal, or other material right in their studio. That kind of customization incites trepidation and escalates costs for traditional designers and builders. But for Asteriskos, it means tweaking an architect's or designer's idea for countless variations, saving hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars.

"In a traditional firm someone makes these drawings by hand still and sends them to a contractor for bids. But because we have fabrication imbedded right in our business, as soon as we're done designing, we can tell you the sticker price. You don't have to send it out for a bid. We cut out a lot of the middle men and a lot more time," Gladchenko says.

Behind it all

Parametric technology and digital fabrication are changing the front—and the back—end of architecture, and Asteriskos is leading the way. Behind the name are Gladchenko, who hails from Russia, and Quick, a proper Wyoming cowboy. Though the duo sounds like a newfangled version of *Spies Like Us*, Gladchenko and Quick met as grad students at SCI-Arc. They have since taught at the University of California-Berkeley, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and the Phoenix Metro chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Their studio has also grown so much since opening a year ago that they're already moving to a more suitable location.

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Photos: <http://www.yeasayer.net/fragrantworld-tourdesign.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/Asteriskosdesign?ref=ts&fref=ts>

High res images and photos of Wiscombe project available upon request

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