



Studio Plastique's recent exhibition, *Current Age*, alludes to the network of cables that underpins our digital lives | Photo source Ryutaro Uozumi / Unsplash

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STUDIO USES DESIGN TO INVESTIGATE SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Studio Plastique's meticulously researched designs explore themes of consumption and circularity

Spotted: Brussels-based Studio Plastique is an innovative studio that explores how design can impact the world and promote change. In practice, this involves designing everything from objects and exhibitions to systems and processes. The overarching goal is to use design to encourage people to reflect on resources, material supply chains and production processes.

For example, Studio Plastique's recent exhibition *Current Age*—which ran over the summer of 2021—explores the role designers play in the generation and distribution of electricity. Hosted at Z33 House for Contemporary Art and Design in Hasselt, Belgium, the exhibition brought together different stakeholders—from grid operators to sustainable energy lobbyists—to present ideas on how electricity systems can be redesigned. The exhibition casts electricity as a habit at the heart of our western identities – one that is difficult to kick.

An earlier Studio Plastique project, *Common Sands*, explored similar themes. Following several years of research, the designers produced a series of household objects built using glass salvaged from electric and electronic appliances. The project raised a broader point about circularity. A lot of glass waste from consumer appliances is not recycled because its characteristics are too variable for the demanding standards of the glass industry. Studio Plastique, by contrast, turned this diversity into a design feature, producing beautiful, unique pieces.

Studio Plastique is led by designers Archibald Godts and Theresa Bastek, who founded the studio after studying together at the Design Academy Eindhoven. The duo encourage young creatives and designers to explore individual ways of being and relating to the world. In their [view](#), 'There are so

many ways of making sensible and empathic contributions as a designer, and the world urgently needs those.'

Design can be a powerful tool for highlighting how waste products can be re-used. For example, at Springwise, we have previously spotted luxury furnishings made from **waste marble** and **upcycled glass gemstones** made from beer bottles.

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Takeaway:

Many people see art as abstract and conceptual. But, in reality, art and practical design are often separated by a very fine line. Moreover, art can provide food for thought, inspiring commercial designs that become part of the physical infrastructure of our world. Studio Plastique's work is a good example of this. The designs are overtly linked to real issues in our supply chains. And the involvement of industry stakeholders in *Current Age* makes this connection between the artistic and the practical explicit.