



# Giant Green Movement

Editor Bae Danbee  
Photographer Jun Yeseul

# Molet

Blue Revolution



Everywhere Better

Molet

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A pallet is made with panels of wood to help transport large cargo. I once saw a high stack of pallets piled up on a construction site. Although no one had taught me about them, I had a vague idea what the pallets were for. I also recall seeing discarded pallets in the city, left behind after heavy deliveries had reached their destination or after a building construction was finished. Architect Ari Liberson must have observed these pallets more closely than most other people. He collected perfectly fine pallets that had been discarded or pallets with small flaws and began sculpting and we're finding them into his own creations. Imagine him working with his strong, bright hands, wearing his blue shirt.





1.

1. People from all works of life participate in the workshops at Molet.

2. The view of the Molet House from the second level. The 2nd floor is a co-working space where Molet members can discuss a wide range of plans.



2.

Everywhere Better

Molet

Molet is an upcycling design studio; its name is short for “Modulate your pallet.” We were impressed by how discarded wood pallets were newly modified into personalized tools and furniture and by how much people He seemed to enjoy this process.

Wooden pallets are usually used to transport large cargo to construction sites. After they are used, pallets are often left discarded on the streets. Pallets are stronger than you think, and there are many uses for them. We paid attention to the useful potentials of pallets and gave them another start: we hoped that people would enjoy making personalized objects with their own hands. Through upcycling, the discarded pallets were reborn for use in homes, schools, and companies. In the process, we created modular spaces and environments that were highly sustainable. Ultimately, we discovered the possibility of sustainable urban living. People of all ages, professional backgrounds, and gender come here to use the pallets to make their own tools or furniture. People are making positive changes in society and the environment with their own hands. This gives us joy and a great sense of achievement. Molet now has studios located in Buenos Aires in Argentina and Tel Aviv in Israel, and we are preparing to open a third studio in Mexico. We hope to continue to expand our sustainable activities all over the globe.

Molet has a unique, free spirited atmosphere and I think this is largely because of the influence of the staff. Please tell us about the types of people who work with you to run Molet.

Molet Consists of groups of more than ten creative experts. Each division has specialized staff. Aside for me, there are 3 joint founders and partners, designers, content managers, creative advisors, and coordinators who help run Molet. One of the co-founders, Eli Saar (hereafter “Eli”), takes care of product design and development and Asaf Etzion (hereafter “Asaf”) is responsible for logistics and administration.

What motivated you to start Molet along with Eli and Asaf?

My hometown is Buenos Aires in Argentina and Molet started off in Buenos Aires. In the early years of Molet, we didn't have a lot of equipment and studios with suitable workspaces as we do today, and it was closer to a personal hobby. Then I received my degree in architecture along with two other friends. We used to meet every weekend and we spent very meaningful time sculpting and refining discarded objects into new creations. At that time, we discovered pallets discarded on the streets, and naturally, we began to research the potentials and possibilities of pallets. When I left Argentina in 2013 and came to Israel, I met Eli and Asaf. Those two were industrial designers, And I was an architect. On weekdays, each of us had a day job, but even while at my job, I missed the time when I used to sculpt and sand wood with my own two hands. These two friends shared my thoughts, and we met every Saturday to collect pallets that were thrown away In Tel Aviv. As soon as we picked them up, we tried making various projects with them. Thanks to these friends who majored in industrial design, I was able to build a more systemic design structure. Furthermore, beyond upcycling furniture with our own designs, we started to consolidate the idea of a DIY workshop to teach people how to convert pallets into furniture themselves. That was how the Molet Studio developed.

I heard that there was a precipitating event that made you expand your hobby into a group with a clearly defined project.

In those days that I was making furniture out of discarded pallets every Saturday, I had the opportunity to participate in a competition with a social purpose. The purpose of the competition was to make furniture for households in economically underprivileged areas. I thought that the aims of this competition and the work that we do corresponded very well. We applied a modular system to creating upcycled furniture with discarded pallets. A module is a system for creating a wider variety of functional items with aesthetic design. This competition was our first community activity and outside engagement and it stimulated us to expand Molet into a formal studio and brand. Although we didn't win the competition, it inspired in us the desire to use these thrown-away pallets to enact positive change in our community.



The warm hues of the wood harmonize well with the symbolic blue color of Molet. The blue color also references the color of the national flags of Israel and Argentina.

**Was there a special reason you chose to move from Buenos Aires to Tel Aviv?**

It was the fortuitous confluence of many events. After I got married in Buenos Aires and we had our first daughter, I wanted to leave Argentina and try living in other regions to experience a new life. Our plan was to live abroad for just one year and we came to Tel Aviv in Israel and soon enough, we settled in this city. I met my two partners and developed Molet through chance and hard work, prepared the studio we have today, planned a variety of workshops and programs, and all of these experiences have endeared the city to me. I'm sometimes amazed that it has already been 6 years since I came here.

**The studio is called Molet House. The columns and frames and most of the structural elements of the building are made with wood, and you have opened up a space in the center of the second floor to enable communication with the first floor – it is a very unique structure.**

It has been less than two years since we opened Molet House. Creating Molet House was the greatest do-it-yourself design project that we had undertaken. We changed the entire roof, and we designed the interior space ourselves. This space used to be a textile and metal works industrial warehouse that has been abandoned for 2 years. After we acquired the site, we cleaned it up thoroughly and broke down barriers to create a broad open space. Through a very difficult process, we finally completed a structure that was divided into four areas across the 1st and 2nd floors. First, we finished the entry area with glass plates so that visitors who are unfamiliar with what we do here at Molet can naturally observe our activities inside. Once you enter the doors, there is a showroom that offers a wide range of Molet products and sustainable items from other brands. Beyond the showroom, you enter the main space of Molet House. This main area is a work space where we make furniture and offer workshops. It is a wide-open space where we have arranged tools, machines, and work tables. The second floor is designed with a square donut shaped layout (“□”) and you can reach it by taking the stairs from the workspace. It is a shared office and there a hole in the center of the floor so you can look down and communicate with people in the showroom. In the office we usually spend our time planning and discussing projects and developing designs. The fourth area is the outdoor space, just outside the doors connected to the first-floor showroom. It's a small backyard where we store our pallets and we have works by artists from Molet's artists arranged out there. People like to rest in this space as well.

**I've noticed the blue colored accents throughout the studio. The background of the logo of Molet is also blue. I think the color harmonizes well with the hue of the wood and creates a lively and warm ambience.**

The national flags of Argentina and Israel both have a prominent blue color. Blue is the featured color of Molet, and it references the blue in the two national flags. This blue is a color that connects Argentina and Israel. Even as I have settled in Tel Aviv, I have not forgotten my Argentinian nationality and I hope I can continue my activities here in my second home, Tel Aviv.

**Molet offers a wide variety of activities. These include workshops, many kinds of programs, and projects or activities that fall under more specific individualized categories. It appears that many people find joy and a sense of achievement through Molet's workshops. Please tell us more about how the workshops at Molet are organized.**

There was a reason we began to plan a wide range of workshops. We don't want to limit the boundaries of design and what it means to be a designer. I think anyone can design forms and shapes and make them on their own. To encourage this, we offer diverse workshops. The workshops can be individually customized based on how long it takes to make the project such as classes that last 1 1/2 hours, 2 1/2 hours, 3 1/2 hours, or 5 hours. There are also workshops available for teams such as groups from the same company or groups of friends and family. Sometimes companies apply for these team-based workshops. Since last year, we have collaborated warmly with various companies. Employees of these companies can take a break from their regular routine and find ways to forge creative and

supportive teamwork and division of labor in the process of working on this craft together. Once you complete your project, you have 2 options. You can take the furniture to your office or home, and the second option is to donate the finished furniture to schools or children's centers to give back to the local community. Such activities can have a powerful and positive impact on the community. Most people who take the workshops have the opportunity to observe and think about objects in ways different from before and leave with a sense of change in their own attitudes and behavior. We think these workshops can be a form of deep meditation, something more than a thought process. People come here and gain a sense of self respect as they create objects. We describe this as the "Pallet Revolution."

**What types of people usually participate in the Molet workshops?**

Anyone can come and make their own tools and furniture at Molet. we welcome everyone. Most of our members are local community members and artists working in various fields. The participants may vary depending on the kind of workshop being offered at Molet. Some people come here to make sustainable objects or items with the design they want, instead of going to shop at IKEA.

**Please tell us about a workshop that you found especially memorable.**

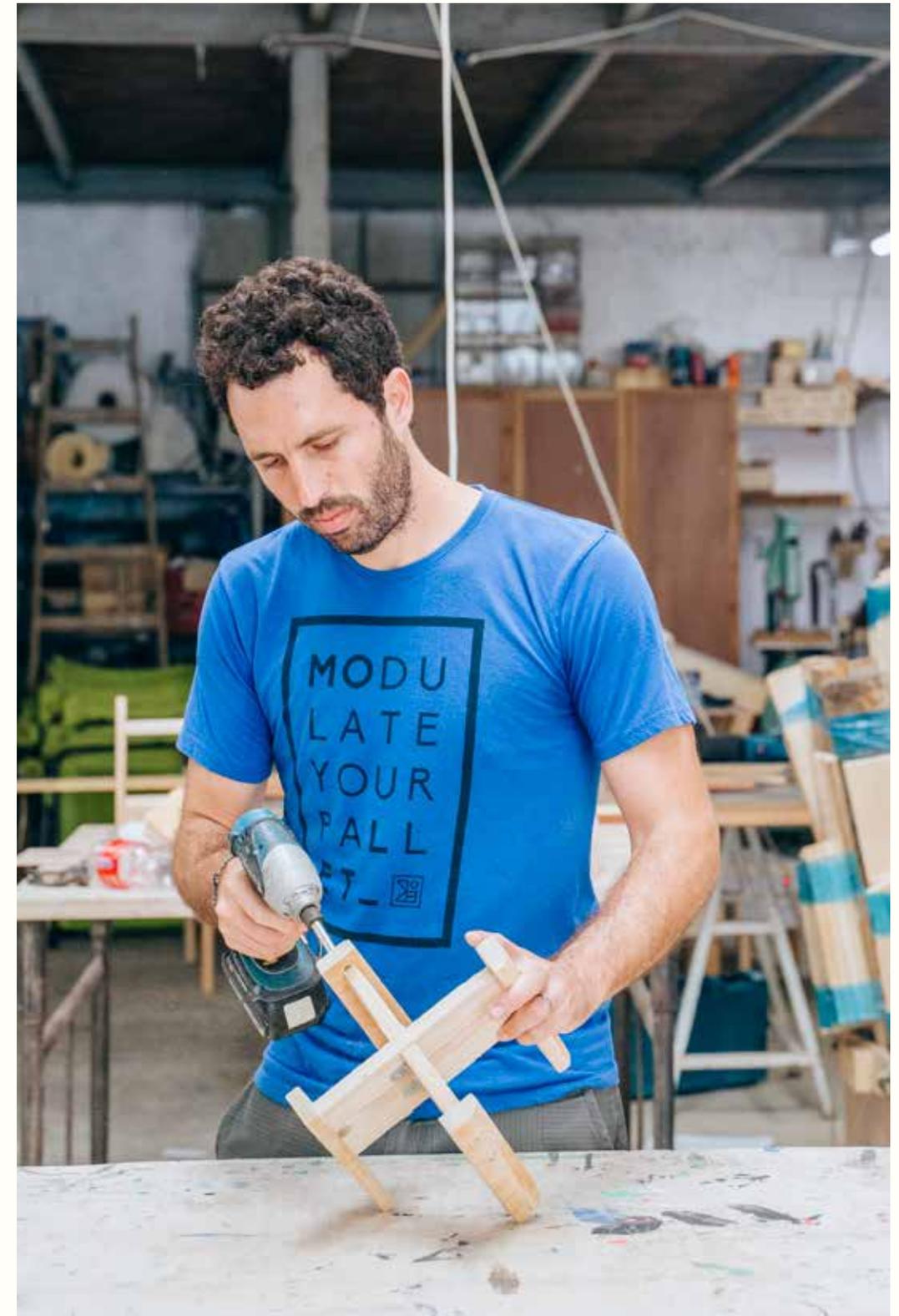
Once I received a request to organize a workshop from a local governmental administration at Buenos Aires. The goal of the workshop was to teach residents of economically underprivileged areas the skills of making wood furniture so that they could apply the skills to their own lives. Our hope was that they would continue to utilize our ideas and knowledge after our meeting. Some of the participants found solidarity with one another and some of them bought small electrical saws to continue studying these skills on their own. The studio is a place where ideas are born, and the workshops are pragmatic programs that aim to help people and the local community embrace new ideas and build sustainable lives. Molet values "Design thinking, Mindful making." Regardless of the protagonist, what is important is the kind of design we make and how we choose to behave.

**What are the criteria you use to plan a project?**

Our projects are premised on the value philosophy of constructing things that will create positive change in the local community. Our projects are divided into 5 core categories, construction and design, community, urban upcycling, education, and culture. All projects have their distinct features and methods, but all categories have in common the value principles of Molet. The projects we pursue here are intended to help us rethink the design and manufacturing process, amplify the values of self-expression and creative exploration an innovation. Through repurposing, the skills of taking something old and remaking it to give it a new function or purpose, gives us diverse new perspectives on the world.

**Would you introduce us to a representative project that Molet completed recently?**

The focus of our projects is always on integrating skills and knowledge and collaborating with other organizations to achieve the values central to Molet. As an example of an educational project we are proud of at Molet, we provide classes on designing and manufacturing objects using upcycled wood to children 3 years or older at eight child care centers In Tel Aviv. We also have projects in collaboration with educational institutions such as ORT and Shenkar College of Engineering and Design. We also have a project with Abraham Hostel to help tourists experience the world of sustainable upcycling. Through this activity, we expand local community projects that promote the tourist industry and help Tel Aviv develop better. we have also cooperated with a non-governmental organization called the Urban Farming Association to generate and develop knowledge about sustainable agricultural methods at Molet House. With the Urban Farming Association, we have also been developing in-house gardens and patios to create urban farming centers that heightened civic awareness about the potentials of Tel Aviv. As you can see, we are always working closely with a wide range of organizations in various social, environmental, and cultural activities to identify ways to enhance the sustainability of Tel Aviv.



The pallets are at the core of these various projects that contribute positively to the local community and the diverse workshops that attract so many participants. What are the reasons you chose to upcycle these pallets?

By making furniture using the discarded pallets you could say we're upcycling wood, space, environments, and the city itself. We call it upcycling rather than recycling, because we transform these pallets into furniture without modifying the material itself which still has a lot of life in them. Although we disassemble the pallets, we retain the same wood that was thrown away. In the case of recycling, you take materials such as plastic or glass and melt them to make new materials. That method is called recycling, whereas upcycling requires greater energy. To upcycle pallets into furniture, you need to go through the module system. Modularization teaches people not only how to make their own furniture but how to design them as well. People take various modules and combine them in many ways to create their own unique distinct furniture. The sidewalk in front of the Molet House have small columns that are spaced evenly apart. We converted one of these into a wooden stool. This is a representative example of urban upcycling. Our actions transform various spaces and environments within the city. Such small actions drive a wave of positive change in the city. To improve the city and the community, we need to think creatively with an eye for design. Such "design thinking" creates positive change through upcycling.



Molet's team members laughing cheerfully in the workspace.

It seems clear that you are doing pioneering work in building a sustainable community and changing the city. In your view, are the residents of this city strongly interested in sustainability?

These past few years, I had a vivid sense that the residents of this city were starting to take a deep interest in sustainability. You can tell from the numerous new sustainable venture companies that have emerged. However, you cannot yet call Tel Aviv a leader in sustainability. There are many tasks and challenges ahead of us. The concept of sustainability has not yet deeply settled into the collective unconsciousness among citizens. The government or local administrations also need to expand systemic methods and policies to achieve their respective goals. However, I think the collective interest and potential in Tel Aviv is enormous. Tel Aviv has always encouraged an innovative spirit and I think it can pursue and achieve sustainable change based on an entrepreneurial spirit.

What kind of work do you want to do at Molet for sustainable living in urban change?

I dream of making Molet a place of cultural exchange, creativity, and interaction with others. I want Molet to blur the boundary between work and play, slow down the pace of our hectic lives, and sometimes make you feel as if time has stopped. I also hope this will be a place that conjoins diverse cultural genres such as fine arts, literature, and music with sustainability and enables people from a wide range of fields to meet one another. Molet is a space that helps people rediscover their roots and revert to a more authentic life. Here, you can express yourself and communicate in the process of making special furniture out of discarded pallets. You will experience a stronger sense of self dignity just by becoming a part of this communal network. Molet wants to combine forces with the local community and keep playing our role to help build a healthier and more resilient local community. I am continuing to live out my dream of traveling the world with all the equipment and environmental support I need, to combine design-oriented thinking and sustainability and make gradual but concrete changes throughout the world.



THE PALLET  
REVOLUTION.

נתנה תא סטאט'ל וז  
סיידה סט זוטע  
אמייק'ס ז'ט זוצ'יל  
סלש'ק'ס אונש



(Left) The entryway of the workspace on the second floor. A sign that expresses the goals of this community is displayed at the top of the entryway.

(Right) The people who make Molet House.