

# ☕ Coffee Talk with Aleksi & Aleksi



**Please tell us about yourself, who are you and what do you do?** Caracara Collective is a design studio run by Aleksi Vesaluoma, designer and material maker, and Aleksi Puustinen, designer and fine woodworker. Our experimental studio creates art and design installations and collections mainly using biowaste. Our work envisions a future without harmful materials and where waste is a resource.

**How did your journey towards sustainability begin and how did you come up with the initial idea?** Ever since starting to make things with their hands, both Aleksis have been aware of the impacts of their creations and want to create a shift into a more environmentally responsible design. The story with biomaterials starts in the summer of 2015 when designer mates Aleksi Vesaluoma and Richard Sullivan started experimenting with how to create materials from orange peel while studying industrial design in London. Over the years this kitchen side project developed into a full-time studio that now operates in Helsinki, Finland.

**What are the biggest challenges you face?** With regards to our materials, the biggest challenge we face is water resistance, which has kept us from implementing long-term outdoor projects with these materials. We have strictly avoided

using anything synthetic in our materials, which has limited the scope of the materials' applications. With regards to running our own experimental studio, the constant challenge comes from finding new projects and funding that enables us to continue. So far we have been fortunate enough to be able to carry on our development.

**What is a possible future for your initiative? Where do you want to be within five years?** Our long-term aim is to share our techniques so that anyone can utilize their waste to create solutions locally. One could create a low-budget and low-tech setup for recycling bio-waste into artisan products, or a whole factory for producing large batches of biodegradable packaging. As a studio, we wish that in five years we can confidently create durable large-scale outdoor projects without materials.

**If you have three free wishes, what would you wish for?** We dream of a world with no war and inequality, where people are nice to each other and where we all put the planet before money and power. Then we would wish for 10 more wishes so that we can fix the problems that we have created.

**What do you think we all can do to solve the plastic pollution problem in general?** This really complex and multi-faceted issue could partly be solved with the right kind

of education, starting from an early age. We think that education has the power to encourage individual and therefore collective behavior change so that people will support more and more plastic-free alternatives and stop supporting companies that drive the plastic-fuelled economy. Furthermore, we think that many countries need to follow France's example and start introducing real bans, which leave no other option but for consumers to avoid disposable plastics, simultaneously lowering the demand for businesses to produce more plastic.

Insights about the project

## “Peel Pressure Made Us Do It”

by Caracara Collective, Finland



*A kitchen side project with orange peel turned into a full-time studio that uses mainly biowaste to create art and design installations.*

