

Philippe Starck

“Beretta Pistol Hand Gun Lamp”

2005

Manufactured by Flos

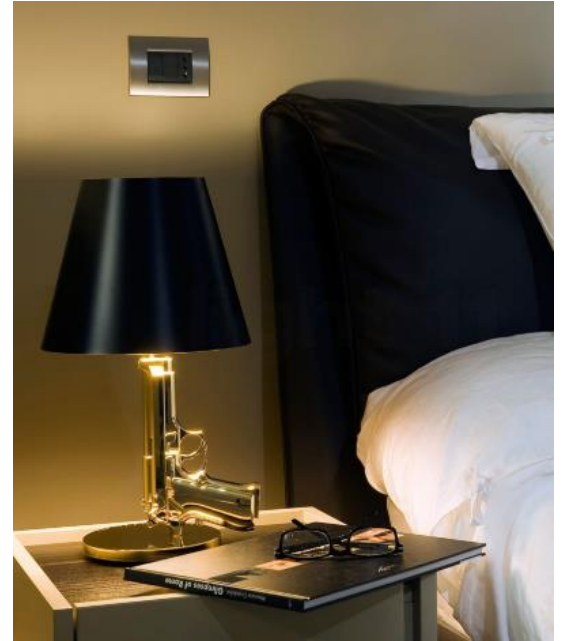


Base: Die-Cast Aluminium with 18K Gold finish

Shade: Matte Black Plasticized Paper with Silk-Screened Gold Printing

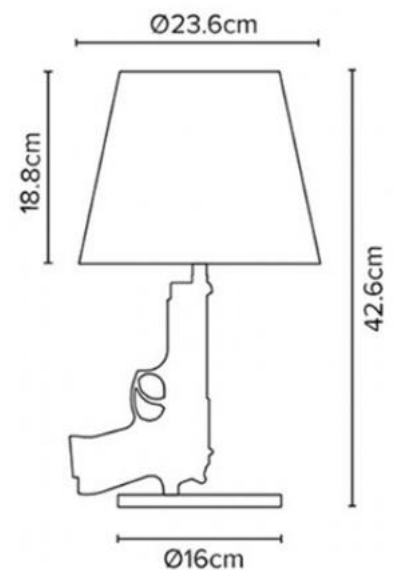
Function

- The function of the bedside lamp is to provide light. The angled shade provides direct light for reading and, at the same time, diffused light to illuminate the entire room.
- It fulfils its function well due to featuring an open top shade. The wide diameter of the shade allows sufficient light to be emitted.
- There's an electronic dim switch on the cord which makes it easy to set the right mood, from dim ambient lighting to bright light.
- With the shade being black plasticised paper, light does not shine through it, meaning the light is only emitted from the top and bottom of the shade. This ensures ambient lighting, appropriate for a bedside lamp.
- The lamp creates an ambient atmosphere as the use of gold on the inside of the shade creates a soft glow. The light of the bulb reflects off the metallic surface creating a warm atmosphere, contrasting with the coldness of the imagery / theme of the lamp.
- As well as functioning well as a lamp, it is also decorative / ornamental due to the base featuring the mould of the gun in a shiny 18K gold finish.



Fitness for Purpose

- Philippe Starck / Flos create durable, high quality lighting. The base is aluminium and so would be very hardwearing, ensuring it would last a long time.
- The size of the lamp is quite small, standing at under 43cm. This means it would be easy to lift and reposition.
- The base is quite heavy at 4 lbs, so the lamp is unlikely to topple over. This ensures it is safe to use as it will not easily fall off a bedside table, necessary due to the glass bulb on the inside. The flat part of the base is wide to counterbalance the weight of the handle of the gun, which overhangs slightly.
- The wide shade ensures the bedside lamp is fit for purpose as it emits an appropriate amount of light. The angled sides of the shade means the light is directed out the bottom, preventing the light from flooding the room making it fit for the purpose of an ambient lamp or reading lamp.
- The plasticised paper lampshade would be more delicate, due to the nature of the materials. This could easily be dented, or the plasticised finish could possibly peel off the paper.
- The lampshade provides protection from the heat generated from the bulb. This is a necessary safety feature to ensure the bulb is not a danger to users.
- As with most lamps, the cord could pose a tripping hazard.
- The cord features a dimmer switch, adjustable from 0-100% brightness. This makes it very fit for purpose as the light can be adjusted to suit individuals' personal preference.



Materials, Techniques and/or Technology

- This lamp is mass-produced by Italian company, Flos. This means there are many of these lamps available due to being produced in a factory by the manufacturers. The lamp is readily available for purchase (although there may be a period of around 6 months to wait for it to be manufactured).
- The 'gun' is made of a die cast aluminium with injection-moulded polymer overprint and a polished 18-karat gold-plated finish. This finish makes it a very luxurious item, reflected in the cost.
- This lamp is an expensive piece of design costing in the region of £1150. The use of 18-karat gold undoubtedly affects the cost. The Philippe Starck name also makes this an expensive product, due to it being a desirable designer piece. The production process may also increase the cost, due to being fairly complicated and time-consuming.
- The traditional shade is matte black plasticised paper with a silk-screened gold printing on the inside.



Working Methods

- The base has been cast from a real Beretta Pistol Handgun which makes the piece ideal for mass production, as the mould can be repeatedly used.
- However, because the body of the gun lamp is made from die-cast aluminium and features an over-moulded polymer coating, this item can require up to six months for delivery from Flos due to the complex nature of the manufacturing process.
- It has a simple plasticised paper shade, commonly used for lampshades. What makes the shade different, however, is the gold silk screen print on the inner with the crosses signifying death and the Philippe Starck logo.



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Target Market / Audience

- This is a statement lamp that could be seen in very stylish interiors. Due to the expense of the product and the materials used to construct it, this lamp is only available to those able to afford it.
- It may appeal more to males, due to the masculine imagery and dark colourway of the shade.
- Perhaps the lamp would appeal to someone who is interested in the politics that influenced the design of the piece, the collusion of war and money.
- The lamp is also available in silver and white. Having two choices of colour may appeal to a wider audience, as it could match different décor. As the silver colourway is perhaps a bit softer than the black and gold version, it may appeal more to females.



Style

- Starck's product designs are of usable household items which he helps to market for mass production. His products and furnishings are often stylised, streamlined and organic in their look and are also constructed using unusual combinations of materials, in this case, the 18k gold base against the black plasticised paper lampshade.
- This sleek and edgy bedside lamp is part of Starck's Guns Collection, making a statement while doing good. "Design is my weapon," says Starck, who donates 20% of the collection's sales to charity. First sight of these lamps provokes shock due to the imagery used – with all that guns have come to stand for: violence, war and suffering, and disgust at having such a powerful symbol turned into a meek and mild domestic object.
- The 18-karat gold lamp makes a statement about the fragility of life. It is a very dramatic and powerful design, with the shade and the base of the lamp contrasting well with one another due to the difference in materials and colour.
- The base is embellished on top with the words "Happiness is a Hot Gun". This inscription adds detail to the otherwise plain and shiny base. The style of the writing is reminiscent of calligraphy, particularly the 'h' and the 'g', which contrasts with the modern style of the base.
- The black shade implies death and this is echoed by the cast gun at the base, symbolising the links between money and death.
- The traditionally styled shade features silk screen gold printing inside, with subtle Starck signature cross decoration, giving an otherwise plain shade a touch of edginess.
- It is available in two colour combinations: 18K gold with a black shade, or a chrome finish with a white shade.



Aesthetics

- Any design by Philippe Starck guarantees original concepts, as his designs are always very unique and cutting-edge. The base is taken from a mould of an actual gun, with some of the details removed, ensuring it looks very realistic.
- The high polished 18k gold finish of the base makes it a very attractive, appealing piece of modern design.
- The inscription in the base, “happiness is a hot gun”, adds detail and texture to this area which is otherwise very smooth and plain. The calligraphy style font that has been used in this inscription, contrasts with the modern edginess of the design.
- The cross detail on the inner lampshade also provides interest on an otherwise plain shade. It is unusual that the pattern is on the inside and not the outside of the shade.
- It is available in two colour combinations: 18K gold with a black shade, or a chrome finish with a white shade.



Visual Impact

- This sleek and edgy, yet controversial, statement lamp is designed to shock due to the imagery of the gun used for the base. This makes it a very eye-catching piece and creates visual impact.
- The style is unusual, creating visual impact due to the powerful imagery used. With the shape of the gun having been taken from a mould of a real hand pistol, the size is very striking also.
- The colour choice is also very striking, with the shiny gold of the gun contrasting with the matte black of the shade.
- The simplistic style of the black shade contrasts with the detail of the gun on the base. The plain outer part of the shade ensures all the attention is on the base.
- The pattern on the inside of the shade provides a surprising point of interest, and is especially noticeable when the light is on due to the metallic finish of the crosses reflecting the light.
- When the light is on, the lamp looks like it is glowing from within, due to the light reflecting off the gold inner of the shade and the metallic base. This adds to the luxurious look emitted from the lamp.
- Visually, the lamp looks like it is an expensive piece of design, due to the smooth, polished 18k gold finish.



Visual Elements (SPLaTT FC)

Shape

- The realistic, well-defined shape of the gun ensures that the theme is obvious. The shape is so realistic because it was created from a mould of a real gun.
- The moulded soft curves of the gun's trigger and handle turn a weapon of destruction into an object of beauty.
- The shapes used throughout are very streamlined, making the lamp look very sleek and sophisticated.
- The straight edges of the lampshade and gun barrel contrast with the rounded base and the curved shapes at the top and bottom of the shade.
- The simplistic, traditional shape of the shade also contrasts with the more complex, modern shapes contained within the gun on the base.
- The round shape at the top and bottom of the shade allows a sufficient amount of light to be emitted.



Pattern

- The inner lampshade contains a repeated pattern of small crosses, which creates interest but also reminds us of the lamps theme (death / gravestones).
- The crosses that have been screen printed on the inside of the shade have a metallic finish, which reflects the light from the bulb. This helps to emit more light and also draws further attention to the inner of the shade, not normally a focal point of a lamp.



Line

- Use of line throughout this design is very sleek and streamlined.
- Detailed lines appear on the construction of the gun, making it appear very realistic.
- On the gun, the majority of the lines are straight, with slight contrast created from the curvature of the trigger and handle.

Texture

- The texture throughout is smooth, which suits the sleek style of the lamp.
- The surface texture of the gun itself would be cold to the touch, like a real gun. This echoes the theme of the lamp being related to death and war.
- The inscription on the base adds texture to the otherwise smooth base.
- There is a contrast of textures on the inner part of the lamp, created with the metallic screen printed crosses against the matte background.

Tone

- Tone does not apply to this design as such, but tonal variation is apparent in the reflections of the base due to it being so shiny. The reflective quality will be further enhanced when the light is on.
- Tonal variations are also seen inside the lamp, on the metallic crosses.

Form

- The form of the lamp's shade is conical, a very standard shape for a lampshade. The rounded shape created by the conical form of the shade allows an appropriate amount of light to be emitted from the top and bottom.
- The form of the rounded base is wide and fairly thick, which gives it weight. This ensures the base can support the weight of the gun and the shade.
- The form of the gun is a realistic 3D shape, making it very striking due to the strong imagery.

Colour

- The black and gold colour combination is very striking and quite masculine in appearance.
- The black shade signifies death, a colour which is often and commonly associated with death and mourning.
- The gold of the base represents money and war. Gold is a colour which is often associated with wealth. The fact the base is coated with 18k gold further suggests the association of money.

The Influence of Social, Cultural and/or Other Factors

- Philippe Starck's intention with the Gun Lamp range from Flos was to create objects which remind us that our own state of well-being is the result of somebody else dying.
- The piece was inspired by war and the different guns used in various wars around the world. The aim of the Gun collection is to draw attention to the global arms exports of numerous governments: Each Flos Gun is an exact replica of a typical fire arm from a certain part of the world. This Bedside Lamp represents Europe (Beretta Pistol Hand Gun), whilst the Gun Table Lamp symbolises the East (Kalashnikov AK47 Gun), and the Lounge Floor Lamp Gun stands for the West (M16 Rifle).



LOUNGE GUN

TABLE GUN

BEDSIDE GUN



- The 18-karat gold of the weapons represents the collision between money and war. The Flos Guns series is a condemnation against the profit made from war and the weapon industry.

- The black shade signifies death. The crosses on the inside of the shade refer to the many lives lost to war and are also reminiscent of gravestones. The entire Gun collection shifts the context to a kind of memorial for the countless dead, who have been killed in the numerous and profit-oriented wars. The crosses also relate to the Starck signature cross logo.



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Starck Musings:

"To Life, To Death

First there were attempts at life, then the draft of life, then life itself. A civilisation was crafted so that life could live. The great, beautiful life, guaranteed to everyone, surged and survived until today, the 21st century. Bravo! Rest in peace.

After just a short period of enlightenment, the shadows return, fast, dense and menacing. Rewind, death is at the door.

Nowadays we kill - religiously, militarily, civilly. We kill out of ambition, out of greed, for the fun of it or of the show. Republics turn bananas. Tyrants are our masters, designed, manufactured, sold, dreamed, purchased and used, weapons are our new icons. Our lives are only worth a bullet.

The Guns Collection is nothing but a sign of the times. We get the symbols we deserve.

Happiness is a hot gun. Glory to our dictators
To Life, To Death"

