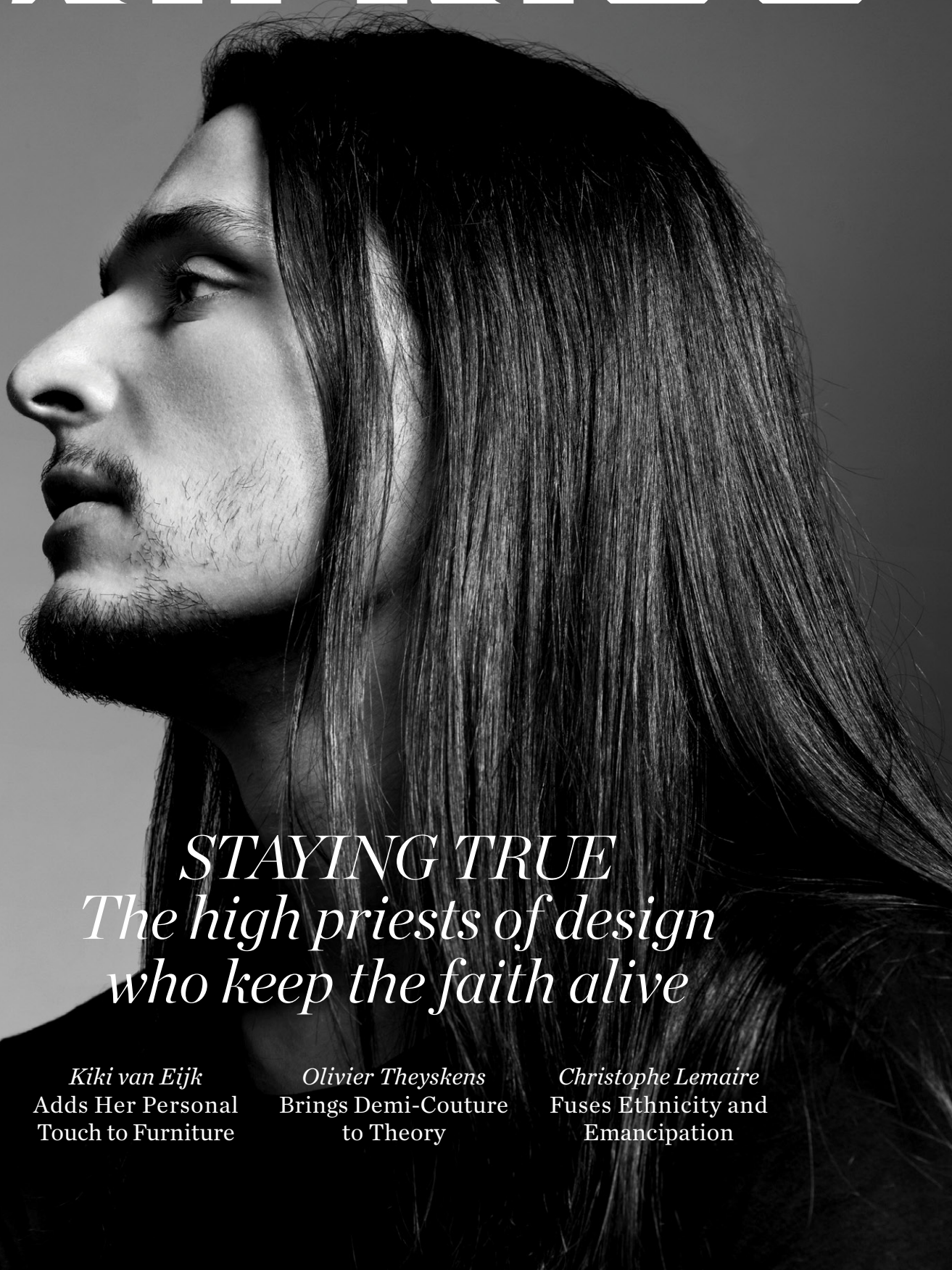


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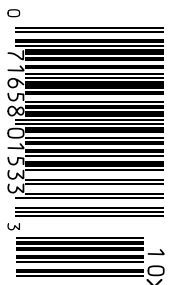
STAYING TRUE *The high priests of design* *who keep the faith alive*

Kiki van Eijk
Adds Her Personal
Touch to Furniture

Olivier Theyskens
Brings Demi-Couture
to Theory

Christophe Lemaire
Fuses Ethnicity and
Emancipation

OCTOBER 2011
DISPLAY UNTIL OCTOBER 24





Critical Thinking

SINGAPORE'S *STUDIO JUJU* SEDUCES AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE WITH NUANCE.

PORTRAIT **MATTHEW TEO**

For Timo Wong, 29, and Priscilla Lui, 28, the soft-spoken founders of Studio Juju, this year got off to a roaring start. On April 25, Design Miami/Basel and W Hotels picked them to receive the career-propelling Designers of the Future Award. A few days

earlier, presenting their pared-down wares at the Salone Satellite during the Milan furniture fair, they scooped up the coveted Design Report Award for best newcomer exhibitor. Although they founded Studio Juju in 2009, “everything has just fallen together this year,” says Wong.

In spite of all the sudden attention, there is little about Studio Juju’s work, except for the occasional hit of unexpected color, that cries out for it. On the contrary, Juju’s pieces are typically thoughtful, purist creations that become more appealing the longer you study them. “People say, ‘You’re Scandinavian, but you’re not. You’re Japanese, but you’re not. So what are you?’” says Lui, noting inevitable comparisons to regions that traditionally deal in subtlety. The answer is that Wong and Lui are a pair of rigorous industrial designers who began letting their minds take a turn toward the conceptual at the National University of Singapore’s Design Incubation Center. There

they partnered on exploratory, research-driven design projects. Since then, they formed their studio to give familiar objects fresh expressions, first by questioning fundamental assumptions and then by breaking down standard furniture typologies to the basics.

“A designer is defined by how he decides, through a process, to lead a project,” says Wong. “Creating something different comes from asking ourselves the right questions—sometimes very naïve questions.”

For instance, when designing the Stacking Drum series of storage containers, which double as side tables, Wong and Lui chose a material—thin plywood—that has the appealing ability to bend easily but comes with the drawback of not being strong enough to support its own weight. Addressing the problem of stabilizing it, they decided to add ribs for structure, and then realized that the supports could be used to create individual pockets inside the containers. To make the



most of the ribs, they sculpted the interior to create walls that prevent the objects inside from falling over and painted the supports to show them off as decoration. “We always try to create something new,” says Wong. “We’re not just making a variation on an existing product.” The studio’s AT lamp began similarly, in this case as a basic quest for light. “We didn’t even ask whether it should be a task light, a light with a base, or a suspension lamp,” says Wong. “We asked, ‘What’s a good height for a light?’” After determining through trial and error what they believed to be the optimal height for a light source above a desk, they added four spindly legs to hold it aloft, giving the lamp a clean, streamlined aesthetic.

Beauty in furniture and lamp designs is only one aspect of Studio Juju’s practice. The pair also works with local healthcare equipment clients. “Medical and consumer electronics serve the real important needs of people,” says Wong. “We think it’s

still important to practice what we trained for—industrial design.” Their true delight: maintaining a good mix. Says Wong: “It’s quite important to surprise ourselves a bit.”

—TIM MCKEOUGH



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Piatti (2011), made from CNC-machined, hand-polished Corian. Bambi chair (2010), made from beech. AT lamp (2011), made from maple and lit by an LED. Duck lamp (2010). Natural beech Stacking Drums (2011).





HALLGEIR HOMSTVEDT
*carves a new niche in
Norwegian design.*

You might expect Norwegian industrial designer Hallgeir Homstvedt, as a former competitive snowboarder, to be interested in the freewheeling side of design. However, being more interested in technical details than showing off with wild tricks, he brings the mentality of an engineer to the job. “My dad is an engineer, and I’ve always been into mechanical stuff,” says Homstvedt. “I try to differentiate products by using new materials or new techniques.” After years in the half-pipe, Homstvedt decided to follow in his dad’s footsteps and studied engineering at school. Eventually dismayed by the book-learning involved, he switched to industrial design at Australia’s University of Newcastle, from which he graduated in 2006.

Homstvedt’s first job at the renowned design studio Norway Says brought him into the furniture fold. “I learned everything about furniture from them and the way the industry works,” says Homstvedt. “But I like to think that I’m a bit more technical. Their style was very aesthetics-oriented.” In 2009, he went out on his own—a smart move. Case in point: Homstvedt’s Glow clock for Lexon. All its components are white, and time is signified by the faint glow of color from behind the arms, the backs of which are painted with a fluorescent hue. His Topp lamp for Established & Sons uses efficient manufacturing processes—a cast-resin base, a spun-aluminum top, and a glass diffuser—to create a design that looks almost artisanal. Now in the process of developing concepts for numerous other manufacturers, Homstvedt continues to search for new product ideas that grow out of engineering decisions. It’s a focus that no doubt makes his dad proud. —T.M.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Undercover lamp (2011). Little Big lamp (2010), designed for the London Design Festival. Corian-framed Glow clock (2010). Metal and porcelain Gro watering can (2010). Cast resin and aluminum Topp lamp (2011).

CHEN CHEN *excites
collectors—and himself—
with happy accidents.*

“I’m really interested in leaving some things to chance,” says 26-year-old New York-based product designer Chen Chen. “You set up the parameters of how a process is going to work, but you don’t really know what it’s going to do until the end.” Take, for instance, his Swell vases, which have a grotesque exterior finish created by spraying expanding polyurethane foam through netted spandex. “The form comes from the tension of these two materials, one trying to push out and one trying to pull in,” he says. “Due to the process, every single piece is unique.” To create his Metamorphic Rock bookends for the shop at Phillips de Pury & Company in New York, Chen uses hunks of granite, brick, and other materials that he recovers from stone yards near his Brooklyn studio and then casts into pyramidal forms. Next up? A collaboration with studio-mate Kai Tsien Williams to develop a line of jewelry—made from marble, granite, and other materials—that the designers hope to have mass-produced.

Trained at New York’s Pratt Institute in industrial design, Chen developed his interest in the more unexpected side of design while attending the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in the Netherlands during a semester abroad. “That was a really eye-opening experience for me, because Dutch culture is way more design-oriented,” he says. He followed that up with retail experience at the Manhattan design store Moss. “That was almost like grad school,” he says. “I got to take apart all of these famous designers’ pieces and then put them back together, so I saw how everything was designed and how everything worked.” These days Chen may be the one inspiring a new generation of Moss devotees. Although he no longer works there, his Swell vases are now displayed at Moss alongside the work of his design heroes. —T.M.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Swell vase, made from fabric, polyurethane foam, glass, and rope. Metamorphic Rock bookend, made from stones and cement. American Ninja nunchuks, made from cement-filled Budweiser cans. Cold Cuts coasters.



PHOTOS: JOSHUA CITARELLA.