



When Three Isn't a Crowd

The 3:1 table has a split personality, vacillating between sculpture and furniture. Its three parts can be used separately as side tables, or collectively to form an 18-inch cube. Its designer, Chicago-based TJ O'Keefe, says he strives to design furniture that is both functional and pleasing to the eye: "Objects bring joy to people's lives not only through function but also through beauty, as in a piece of art. I like to walk the thin line between sculpture and furniture." With this table, which is constructed of powder-coated aluminium, O'Keefe has taken one of the purest, most basic forms and given it an artistic tweak. Is cubism back? <http://tjokeefe.com>



From Nepal, with Knots

The Roots Rug by Matali Crasset for Nodus is the first-ever collaboration between the French designer and the contemporary rug company. Resembling the roots of an old tree, this three-dimensional woollen floor covering comes in four heights and is hand-knitted in Nepal, with one hundred asymmetrical knots to every square inch. The finished article has a diameter of 220cm, and a quasi-mystical, Middle-earth quality. The Roots Rug was recently on show at the Maison et Objet exhibition in Paris. www.matalicrasset.com



Elegance that Stacks Up

The new Makil chair by Parisian designer Patrick Norguet and specialist furniture manufacturer Alki is an exhibit in delicate French elegance. Made entirely of oak, using the best possible bending techniques, this stackable chair was recently presented at the Maison & Objet exhibition in Paris. Sober and classical, the chair has a timeless beauty, owing to its clean lines, simplicity, and the excellent craftsmanship by Alki. Norguet and Alki have enjoyed a number of successful collaborations in the past and this latest effort looks set to continue that tradition. www.patricknorguet.com www.alki.fr



Moroccan Tableware

Drawing on Berber, Arabic and Moorish design traditions, Edward Hale has produced a tableware ensemble consisting of a teapot, a tagine and some smaller bowls. Based in New York, Hale, a graduate student at the Pratt Institute, drew inspiration for his collection from the traditional Moroccan tagine, a vessel used for cooking the Berber dish of the same name. The structure of Hale's tagine and teapot was influenced by muquarnas, a decorative type of corbel seen in Persian architecture. The design for the smaller bowls in his collection came from zillij, terra cotta tiles characteristic of Moroccan architecture, and typically consisting of geometric mosaics used in decorating walls, ceilings, floors, pools and fountains. With this collection Hale sought to capture the complexity and diversity of North African culture. Computer rendering and modelling helped bring traditional forms into the 21st century. www.coroflot.com/eehale

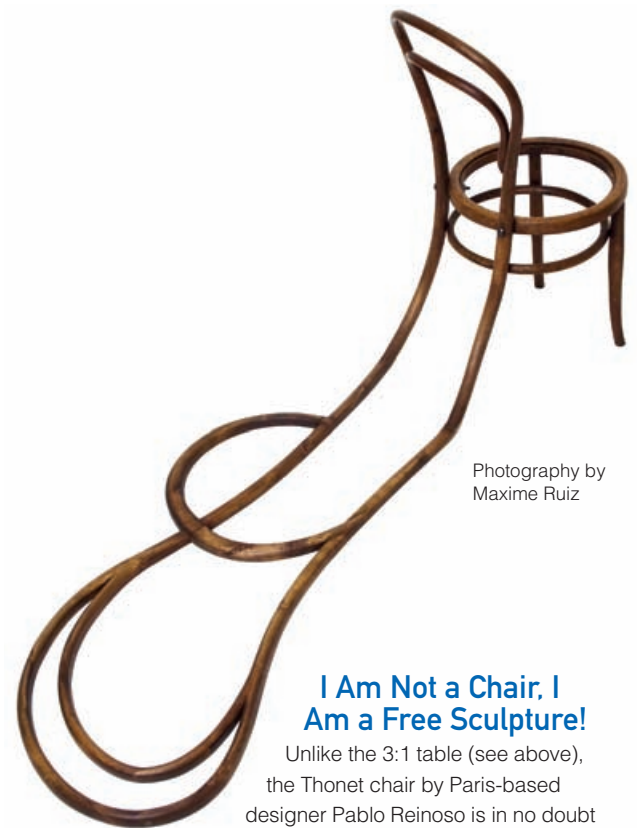


Antipodean Bookcase

If you like to have things custom-made, why stop at clothes? Upside Down by Sorbonne graduate Adrien De Melo allows users to construct their ideal bookcase according to their individual needs and taste. Transparent boxes are suspended from the ceiling with straps, offering a stylish if unconventional way of housing books. Each box is made of a stainless steel frame covered with translucent polyurethane-inflated cushions. Designed to hang from the ceiling like a music score, the Upside Down bookcase has a sleek, modern look and seeks to make the most of the space available. www.galeriebsl.com



Photography by Carlos Yebra



Photography by Maxime Ruiz

I Am Not a Chair, I Am a Free Sculpture!

Unlike the 3:1 table (see above), the Thonet chair by Paris-based designer Pablo Reinoso is in no doubt as to its identity. This chair is all sculpture, and would be perfectly at home in a scene from Alice in Wonderland. In an exploration of the iconic No. 14 chair by Michael Thonet, Reinoso's latest work takes the bentwood original and extends it beyond its normal boundaries to produce chair sculptures that are both elegant and playful. Inherently impractical as furniture, this range of pieces, with their exaggerated lines and refined craftsmanship, is a curious thing of beauty. All that's missing is the tea party. www.pabloreinoso.com



One More Coffee Chair for the Road

Coming to a cafe near you could be the ultimate in coffee-house seating. Korean designer Sunhan Kwon's stylish furniture piece is designed to solve your where-to-hang-my-bag problems when in a busy cafe, while bringing a touch of geek chic to the surroundings. The chair is made with a European wood veneer and comes in three finishes: black, white and natural. Although received wisdom might suggest that hanging your personal items on the back of chairs in cafes makes your belongings vulnerable to theft, the Coffee Chair is fresh, fun and has a practical application. www.hewasborn.com



The Natural Wall

From the United States' oldest and largest wallpaper manufacturer comes a new collection with designs that are nature-inspired and universal. As the firm's Vice President of New Product Development Gina Shaw says, "Motifs from nature are universally pleasing and easy to live with." Founded in 1895 in York, Pennsylvania, where the company's headquarters are still located, York Wallcoverings uses a unique recycled-sand technique that creates a subtle texture. Seen here are Mimi, from the Dolce Vita collection, featuring a twig-and-leaf design in hot pink; Alessa, also from Dolce Vita and inspired by an archival design, which sets multi-coloured butterflies against a quiet white background; and Harrison, from Ronald Redding designs, based on a hand-painted mid-20th-century pattern. All three designs are available in five colour ways. www.yorkwall.com



Walking for Art

Art lovers and the charitably minded can look forward to enjoying an evening of fine wine, finger food and artwork as they embark on the eleventh edition of the Hong Kong ArtWalk next month. Supported by participating galleries and restaurants, the annual event raises money for charity through ticket sales and has so far raised HK\$4.5 million since its inception in 2001. Last year's event saw 1,500 participants and yielded HK\$428,000 for the Society for Community Organisation (SoCO), who will again be the beneficiary of monies raised this year. The 2011 event will be held on 16 March between 5pm and midnight. Tickets, priced at HK\$450 for adults and \$150 for tertiary students, can be bought at galleries along Hollywood Road and Wyndham Street from late February. www.hongkongartwalk.com



Britannia Rules the Trunks

With a royal wedding in the offing, British designer Kelly Hoppen MBE has decided to start the flag-waving early. This latest design is to be added to the vintage-inspired Halo collection. The trunk measures 20" by 18" by 19" and is embossed with a Union Flag across the front. Says Hoppen, "I am deeply proud to be British and I designed this trunk to demonstrate British heritage. With the royal wedding coming up this year it expresses the way in which Britain is a proud nation." Made of plywood, leather and 800 steel studs and nails, this handmade trunk has a canvas interior and takes 72 hours to make. A stylish addition to any room in need of additional storage space. Let the flag-waving begin. www.halpasia.com



Safe Seating

Yes, February's Search has gone chair crazy. And in a continuation of this edition's theme, Search presents the no-nonsense Stop Thief Chair! This is a practical attempt to reduce cafe crime and is the antidote to the security unconscious Korean Coffee Chair. While coffee house crime may be low in Korea, this chair, designed by the straightforwardly named Design Against Crime Research Centre in England, takes crime seriously, and rightly recognises that one's valuables are safest when between one's legs. Manufactured by Dan-Form in Denmark, this Anglo-Danish 'crime-buster' is affordable, stackable and comes in a plethora of colours and finishes, telling us in no uncertain terms that crime-fighting need not be dull. This not-to-be-messed-with item of furniture can be seen thwarting thieves on the streets of London, where it is currently being tested in selected cafes. Pickpockets, you have been warned. www.stophiefchair.com



Ergonomic Kitchen

A collaboration between renowned Italian kitchen brand Valcucine, 'interior spatial specialist' Rimadesio and veteran Hong Kong food-and-travel columnist and interior design consultant Walter Kei has produced The Playground, a home-kitchen concept. The kitchen incorporates state-of-the-art design, durability, fine craftsmanship, high-tech functionality and visionary eco-concepts. There is no doubting the visual appeal of The Playground with its functional modern look and aluminium, black, grey and white fittings, which were inspired by the geometrical block-style art of Bauhaus painter Piet Mondrian. Employing the Mimesis and Aerius wall units from Valcucine, for their streamlined style and functionality; Rimadesio's floor-to-ceiling Velaria sliding glass doors and Graphis Light sliding glass panels; and designed by Walter Kei; The Playground has the high-end condo-living techno-geek beauty that speaks to modern life in a clean, refined, ergonomic language. www.mooi.hk



Through a Glass, Darkly

The Gagosian Gallery in Hong Kong is celebrating its recent opening with an exhibition by British artist Damien Hirst. Visitors to the gallery can expect to run the gauntlet of familiar Hirst motifs, as well as some of a lighter nature. Death has long been a theme of his art – perhaps arising from the time he spent at a mortuary while a student in London – and the transitory nature of life is explored in his Butterfly Fact Paintings. In his previous work the Briton focused on the darker aspects of life, such as brutality and violence. A wider theme of his latest collection, however, is the duality of the human condition – life and death, beauty and decay, et al. Also on display, until 19 March, is a series of jewel-containing medicine cabinets and a life-size human baby skull cast in platinum and covered in 8,128 pavé-set diamonds. www.gagosian.com/exhibitions/2011-01-18_damien-hirst



Projection, Please

Sanyo Electric Co Ltd has introduced the PLC-HF15000L and PLC-HF10000L projectors, which offer best-in-class levels of brightness, resolution and colour accuracy. Designed for professional use, such as in auditoriums, exhibition halls and digital-signage applications, the devices deliver extremely high-quality images due to their 2K panels and QuaDrive® engines. With the global market for large-scale high-definition projectors expected to rise by 50% annually, according to its press release, in line with the increasing popularity of high-resolution video content, Sanyo hopes to build on the success of its recent models. www.sanyohk.com