

KOHLER MAGAZINE

DESIGN DISCUSSIONS AND COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD

NEW YORK

OPEN FOR INSPIRATION:
THE KOHLER EXPERIENCE CENTER LANDS IN NYC

TONY CHI & FAMILY

"I'm not a hotel designer. I'm a business designer."

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IS DUBAI THE WORLD'S NEXT CULTURAL HUB?
ART, CUISINE AND FLORISTRY:
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Sensis

Streamlined simplicity, intelligent beauty

Continuing its tradition of combining intelligence and beauty, Kohler now launches the brand-new Sensis intelligent toilet. Created in the company's Shanghai Design Studio, led by Lun Cheak Tan, Sensis has been in development for the last 18 months.



“People have loved our previous intelligent toilets, Karing and Veil, because of the way they hide the electronics in a simple form,” explains Lun. “You don’t see the technology, but it’s all there. And again with Sensis, we designed it as a sculptural piece of furniture rather than an electronic device. The design has warmth and fits smoothly against the wall with all water pipes and electrical fittings out of sight.”

“In terms of technology, hygiene and cleanability are key with this design. We have a water filter so every time you flush, the water being used has hard water impurities, chlorine and heavy metals filtered out. And just like the drinking water filter you use in your kitchen, the cartridge is easily replaceable – a subtle LED light tells you when it’s time to change it. Then we have an additional system of sterilized water, which is used for the bidet wand and the bowl. Every 24 hours, this water sanitizes the toilet interior, plus a UV light is used directly on the wand to sterilize it further.”

“We’ve really thought about the usability of Sensis: For example, its height, the seat comfort, there’s an emergency flush button in case of a power cut, and we’ve even had to think about the decibel level of the flush – it can’t be too quiet because people wouldn’t realize it’s actually working. From a design perspective, all this technology is invisible because it’s wrapped up in this beautiful sculptural form.”

at 4:45pm

on Wednesday, May 24

in New York

Celebrating the opening of the Kohler Experience Centers in New York and London

MARK BICKERSTAFFE

Director,
New Product Development,
Kohler Co. K&B EMEA
and ASPAC



“We care about creativity and we want to share our creativity with you.”



This spring saw the opening of the first two Kohler Experience Centers (KEC) in New York's Flatiron district and in London's Clerkenwell.

They feature the full range of Kohler's kitchen and bathroom products as well as private bathing spaces, a satellite gallery of the Wisconsin-based John Michael Kohler Art Center, and Kohler consultants who are on hand to advise and closely assist design customers.

Indeed, the global specification service will allow architects and designers working on international projects to have hands-on access and advice on products across the company's global portfolio.

Speaking at the opening of the KEC NYC, Mark Bickerstaffe explained why the company had the idea for these global flagship showrooms and consultation centers:

"It's called an Experience Center for a very important reason. Not only do we want you to see the products that we care so much about, but also to really experience them. So you can come and you can actually get under the showers, you can use the kitchens and bathrooms and get a grasp of the beautiful palette of products that Kohler is able to offer.

And I think that emphasizes a really important point about Kohler and

what we feel our mission is. This place is for architects and designers, but it's also for everybody, to help you create the best, most beautiful bathroom that you possibly can, whatever your project size. Whether it's your own bathroom or a multi-unit residential or hotel project, this place is designed to give you the ability to visualize it.

Around the KEC you'll see and experience our product category areas, where we will work with you to put your ideas together, helping you combine this massive range of products we have, all the options and variations including all our finishes.

Apart from our products, as you walk into the KEC, the first thing you'll see is a piece of art, which comes from our Arts/Industry artist residency program and it's a really important part of the DNA of Kohler.

We value artistry as that ultimate expression of creativity and personal freedom, and we wanted to put it front and center to say, 'we care about creativity and we want to share our creativity with you'."

Following New York and London, Kohler Experience Centers will open in Los Angeles, Singapore, Bangkok, New Delhi, and Taipei.

Learn more: www.kohler.design



at 10:50am

on Sunday, March 28

in New York

TONY CHI

Designer and Visionary

Photography: HELGA TRAXLER

*“I’m not a hotel
designer; I’m a real
estate designer. I’m a
business designer.”*

Tony Chi is one of the most celebrated interior designers working today. His designs can be found around the world in the hospitality industry, where his dictatorial clarity of thought is much in demand. He is absolutely not interested in being the type of designer whose role is just to fill a room with furniture. His holistic approach and commitment to process takes in much wider concerns – from the hotel’s demographic neighborhood to what time and angle the sun will touch a space during the day.

A roll call of his past work includes Park Hyatt Shanghai, Park Hyatt Washington DC, Andaz Tokyo and Intercontinental Geneva, and upcoming projects include the Ritz Carlton Mumbai and Rosewoods in Hong Kong and Carlyle New York.

Having arrived in the US in the mid-60s from his native Taiwan, he speaks today with a heartfelt and subtle ‘Nu Yoick’ accent noticeable particularly in his diphthongs. His Lower Manhattan creative studio has an open and familial feel – not just because of the tightknit team of designers, but also because it’s where his wife and daughter work.

The Process

“We have 1,000m² for our team, which is a luxury for New York but it’s important for me – how we work, how we live – it has to be manageable. Our studio receives one Request For Proposal (RFP) a day, and while it is truly an honor to have such recognition, the volume is overwhelming. You simply can’t expect to commit to every single one. Instead, I’ve always focused to have our studio go beyond the RFP process and reach out directly to the owners. The beauty of the project is to share a vision, start a dialogue and exchange thoughts.

I only work on one project at a time in one city. This is so I can concentrate geographically in one place. I travel out of New York 200 days a year, meaning when I’m in a city working on a project, it has my full attention.

I’ve spent years slowing down my process. I see time as a valued commodity because I

understand how each moment, hour and day counts. People tell me it takes a long time for me to create a project or give the deliverables. I do it on purpose! People say, ‘This other design firm can do it in eight months and you want 15 months?’ Yes I can do it in eight months, our studio is just as capable, but I refuse to. If they want me, I’ll tell them this is how long it’ll take. If you don’t care about the process why should I care about your project?

Every decision on a new potential project starts with this in mind. It’s never a pure business decision, it’s about who do you want to work with and co-exist with. The process starts with this. Everything is about the process! Process is the part that gives you this incredible reward, the start of the creative journey.

You start with the first line on an empty piece of paper and once you have that first line, it dictates the second line and these two lines start connecting all the dots. Now you can see the possibilities – that’s how the process begins.

In this studio environment we’re a working team. We have designers in six areas: Interior, industrial, architecture, lighting, deco and graphic design. Tammy and I have a certain culture and that’s why some people gravitate to us. And then people stay for years. For New York, that’s unusual.”

Tony’s wife and business partner, Tammy, has her office in the studio operating as the *de facto* office matriarch and also co-founder of Tzelan, the brand she created with Alison, their daughter. Unsurprisingly she also highlights the importance of the process and time:

“The question we’re always asking is how to have design that feels like it’ll be there for generations? And it’s not easy, because design isn’t fashion, it takes time. We’re not designing trends rather timelessness. Properties and spaces remain in our lives for generations even beyond our lifetimes. It takes time to build beautiful design.

I wanted the studio to be an open working space without cubicles, a space with flow, a space where it’s not just about looking at a computer. We can see others working, we’re





“I’ve spent years slowing down my project process. I do it on purpose!”



This page:
Tony Chi in his office

*“We’re not an office where
we’re talking to each other
through email.”*



not an office where we're talking to each other through email. You need to talk, but that needs to be taught, encouraging communication. The studio has a family foundation; we make sure the designers here are nurtured and supported – I call it post-school."

The team and family spirit is deeply entrenched in the studio's working culture, and Tony refers to it constantly as integral to the process and creative journey:

"Sharing the process and thoughts with the team really defines collectiveness and togetherness to achieve the unknown. And I say the unknown, because if you want to have the 'known', then why bother to do it? The beauty of the process is when you do this collectively and you explore the unknown, you have an idea of where you're going but you don't know what the end result will be. But you do know it will be amazing and exciting.

Some designers will take on any job and they'll design it and photograph it, and then they'll say 'the job is done'. And they move on to the next project. I find that disappointing.

I'm more interested to see what the project will become, realizing its potential. I don't think of my projects as being finished the moment I hand over the keys. In fact, the project only truly begins when the project is completed. It is a new life in the making. The hotel operators are starting that life and are allowing it to grow. We have built the body and the hotel operators are now forming the soul."

The Neighborhood

"Typically in a commercial or hotel project you get an RFP – but the moment you get an RFP, the process is already done and you're coming to the bottom of the food chain to facilitate a service.

But we do have clients who will have some land to create a mixed-use project – retail, office and hotel – and want a creative way to achieve this project. They'll ask 'what can you do for me?' These are the projects that we find absolutely exciting because you start

exploring all sorts of possibilities. Mixed-use buildings are becoming pivotal to our way of life because you're able to bring different demographics together and improve the intellectual health of a neighborhood.

A hotel is not sustainable by itself; it has to be in a mixed-use environment and in that respect, I'll always look at a hotel project in context. In an urban setting I need to think about the people who live there, who visit there and who work and do business there. With hotels, I cater to those who desire a place to live, who are coming to a neighborhood for a purpose: It's either business, social, essential or tourism. But a hotel is also a facility for those people who live in the neighborhood too. You know, if my relatives visit me, I can't accommodate everyone in my house, so I'll put them in a hotel, which becomes an extension of my house.

I've stayed in a hotel for months. I know it's not the same as home, so when I design a hotel what I'm trying to do is to bring some comfort for the individual, which allows them to bring comfort to the entire neighborhood. The guest has to be intrinsic to the community. And that for me is part of the process – to realize that."

The Elements

"The guest doesn't see the process, but I hope their conscious awakens through my planning and they feel that there's a little more substance and thought – making them aware of certain things.

For example, a developer once told me that his land didn't have an ocean view and that was a huge handicap. However, I replied: 'Actually you're wrong, your land has incredible earth and trees'. Not every piece of land has a view and if you think that the view is the only thing that matters, then your mind is too narrow. Can you imagine a piece of land with beautiful 100 year-old trees, that when the wind blows and when it rains you can hear the leaves rustle?

It's not always about the obvious. Why do I live on the ground floor of an apartment house? It's so I can hear the rain.

Left:
Tammy Chou in her office

Far left:
Artwork: 'horse shower'
by Eduardo Hoffmann

Not many people know this: At the Park Hyatt Shanghai, which is in a 500 meter tall skyscraper, I stay on a certain floor, I think it's the 80th, because on that floor there's a wind blade on the outside, so when the rain hits the blade, I can hear it. And I feel grounded, it's very calming and that gives me a great sense of place. Otherwise, when you're up in the sky you don't hear anything. In my house in Taipei, I can hear and smell the rain – these things are important to me.

Again, it's not always about the view. There's the Shangri-La in London that has this high view over everything, but with Rosewood London, I still maintain that no one has a view like ours. Every room has a different view, you can see the rooftops, you can almost imagine that Mary Poppins is going to stop by.

We've been working with Rosewood for eight years, the brand now owned by the Cheng family based in Hong Kong. They came to me before the new Rosewood brand was created – they wanted to have a new hotel brand identity expressing a sense of place, reflecting the heritage, culture and intimate connection with each respective location. We developed the DNA from scratch and when they had the opportunity to buy Rosewood, they bought it and we took the DNA we'd already developed and transplanted it into this new Rosewood group. Of course, they already had an origin from Texas: Caroline Rose Hunt created the brand there in 1979. We took that origin and fused it with a new idea.

The second part of our involvement was now to slowly change the expectation a guest has of a five star hotel. We thought about the whole operative platform and modifying that takes time. Everything has to change, even Human Resources because they'll be hiring people in a different way.

Again this goes way beyond the traditional role of a 'hotel designer', in fact when people ask me what do I do? I tell them: 'I'm not a hotel designer; I'm a real estate designer. I'm a business designer. I create equilibrium – the perfect balance between the business world, the supply world and the demand world. I create the supply and I create the demand'.

I have to think about what kind of possibilities I can create. Sometimes I go back

to the client saying I've redesigned or re-planned the masterplan. I may modify it, make modest adjustments or in some cases major adjustments, so radical that the client may say, 'You can't do that!' – and then I have to think: 'Is this project right for me?'

But sometimes the architects embrace these changes. One time I said I wanted the hotel entrance to face east because the flights coming into the city are morning flights, so by the time guests get to the hotel, it's 8am and the sun comes into the entrance door. It's thinking about the best scenario for the experience. We create experiences. These are the things that architects sometimes don't think about. All this happens at the very beginning of a project. I push the envelope and some owners embrace this process and some don't."

The Andaz

"One long term client I have been working with is Hyatt; I have had a beautiful relationship with them for almost thirty years. It makes it special to do a project together. With a new client there's always a process of getting to know them and that takes time.

Around 14 years ago Hyatt came to me with a fabulous opportunity. They wanted a new brand and I was honored they asked me. We said if we are to create a brand it shouldn't have a Hyatt name – and that's how we started with Andaz.

They wanted to grow the brand fast but to do that you have to think about urban renewal – find an existing building and retrofit it. You don't go ground up. That means instead of an eight-year project you can convert a building as a three-four year project. To be able to do this you have to hit mature cities, which have the possibilities of urban renewal – Boston, Paris, London – because you're not going to find urban renewal opportunities in Orlando.

Thirdly, I said there is a lack of people who want to work in the service industry, meaning you need to be dependent on fewer people, then there's also less real estate available. Thirty years ago, a 400-room hotel would



Photography: MICHAEL MORAN

Top right:
100 Century Avenue
Restaurant at the Park
Hyatt Shanghai

Middle right:
Rose Bronze Gallery at
Rosewood London

Bottom right:
Noble House Suite at
Rosewood London



“Everything is about the process! It is the part that gives you this incredible reward, the start of the creative journey.”





“I don’t think of my projects as being finished. I’m interested to see what the project will become, realising its potential.”



easily be one million square feet, 100,000m²; today with a 400-key hotel, you're lucky if it's 40,000m². We formulated the concept around these ideas – the idea of 'how do we streamline?'

New York was the first Andaz, where they found a clothing factory on 41st and 5th Avenue, and we converted this 22,000m² building creating about 184 keys out of it.

And so we had to streamline: We're in New York, we have the best of everything here, so the hotel doesn't have to make everything, instead let's curate the best. If I want a croissant we procure the best croissant maker, same with a muffin, same with pastrami, finding the best pastrami maker – curating the menu making it one of the best in New York.

Then we thought about the millennials – they're interesting. How do we create something that has value for these people, so Andaz is about individual life. And then finally they found this word in Sanskrit – Andaz – sounds good from a to z and we designed the logo here with Robert Louey who does all our branding work. And that's how we started – a hotel based on the concept of essentials.

So then we thought about what is essential for a city hotel in New York. For example, we have a footbath in every room, because people are on their feet all day. Let's have a great shower, no bathtub for financial and demographic reasons, because America has got a shower culture. But in Europe and Asia, for sure all Andaz rooms have a bathtub.

The first Andaz in New York we called Andaz 1.0, then in Tokyo, we made Andaz 2.0 – the brand is still evolving around essentials, for the user and also the developer as well. We're saying to the developer, 'Don't spend money on things that don't matter'. Don't matter to whom? Don't matter to you, don't matter to the consumer, the brand, the future.

How do we build something that has sustainability? Five years after a hotel opens you have to renovate. What do you do? Redo the whole thing? We wanted to give each property the opportunity to re-dress itself. An Andaz must be a fantastic white box, so five years from now it can get a new coat of paint,

new furniture, new artwork. It's constantly evolving and that's very different to the way many other hotels are fitted out.

How do you design something that can sustain five to ten years? We don't want to rip out the whole bathroom and rebuild again – and this is something I think about not just for Andaz but for all projects. Although Andaz is an extreme example of the white box and everything inside the room is prefab, which means we are minimizing what is being built on site. Everything comes from the factory and is plugged into the white box – from the toilet to the bed.

At the time the developer understood that clearly but over time, it's been derailed somewhat, as Andaz became more popular, because the brand started doing well, they added more bells and whistles and lost a little bit of that original spirit.

Tokyo made a significant difference for the brand, helping it define its place globally. And now I'm getting involved to do an Andaz 3.0, the Andaz reboot, the location of which hasn't been publically announced yet. They said do one more for us and I can take the Tokyo Andaz level up a notch."

The Future

"The next hotel coming up for me is the Rosewood Hong Kong, reinventing the five star hotel – completely revolutionary and opening next year – and in 2019 we have our new Andaz and the Grand Hyatt Gurgaon.

So what else do you want to know? The future? What I don't want to do and what I feel uncomfortable with is the concept of branded commercial condominiums. If you say, for instance, that this is a 'tonychi' branded residence, it means absolutely nothing. I believe residential projects are exciting opportunities to redefine the concept of today's urban lifestyle. Now, that gets me inspired.

I'm also interested in doing a hospital. Think about it: If you take away all the scientific stuff from a hospital, you have a hotel. No, I'm being serious!"

at 2:21pm

on Monday, March 27

in New York

ALISON CHI

Managing Director,
Tzelan



Alison Chi has popped up her Tzelan House in the shared workspace with her family – a large Manhattan studio space where her father Tony Chi has been running his design studio for the past eight years. The familial environment is tangible with shared communal lunches and her liaising closely every day with the same designers who are working on Tony’s hotel projects. This allows her to dovetail her work with these projects and fill a much needed gap in the furniture and interior accessories market.

“I formulated our brand Tzelan in 2013 with my mom, because as Tony Chi projects grew larger in scale, they could last five to seven

in fact she’s keen to point out how much Tzelan is a creative collaborative platform.

“Collaborations are very important to us to maintain a quality and not let obstacles generate mediocrity. We’re creating a network of artists, artisans, designers and manufacturers; bringing people together from Italy, Argentina, Harlem, Taipei, and Hong Kong depending on the project.

Our first big project was the café and lobby refit of the Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore. We did the chairs, tabletop accessories and the ‘barmoires’, a standing drinks cabinet in each of the private dining rooms. They’ve got pressed leather doors, capped in stainless steel that wrap around the sides and inside there’s room for bottles and our glasses. I’d love to have one in my apartment, but I don’t have the room.”

And that comment is key to Tzelan’s design ethos. Alison creates bespoke

furniture and accessories for the hospitality industry that have the same level of comfort and flair as what you’d have in your own home.

“We started the company as just being B2B, where you’d buy wholesale through us, but now we’re a few years old, we’re looking at the consumer market, selling with retailers, our website and pop-ups in Hong Kong and Taipei. But it’s not just for hotels, we’re moving into bespoke services and we’re working right now on a Tony Chi book for a publisher that Tzelan is producing in-house.”

As she prepares for a trip to the Milan Salone Furniture Fair, she’s looking ahead to her next big project: Rosewood Hong Kong, which will open next year.

“We’re working on guest room furniture for this new Rosewood with everything made locally. Again, everything we do is about elevating the hospitality industry, nothing generic, instead providing each client with residential-style products. It’s about creating that same sense of peace in a hotel that you have in the intimacy of your own home.”

“Every item we produce has a heritage artisanal storyline.”

years. By the time they are ready for installation, the last phase when the hotel is ready to open, the teams struggled to source the final touches that would give the space the personality and uniqueness it needed. And because of the timing, they had to be sourced from what was commercially available, causing the overall design intent to suffer in quality. So what we do is design these final touches from the get go. We’re a supplier of table top accessories, smaller furnishing pieces, lights and all the fixtures that are not fixed to the ground, walls or ceiling, making sure that these pieces reflect the original brand concept of the project.

I really believe the hospitality experience is in the pieces you touch, sense and drink out of, these are the things that stay in your memory. And so every single item we produce has a heritage artisanal storyline and is developed through a design process, so by the time the hotel is ready, we’re ready. These pieces are not just ordered from a shelf – they’ve been developed over time.”

This in-house dovetailing of businesses doesn’t preclude working with other people,

Photography: GINA SABATELLA

Left:
Alison in her office

A barmoire standing
drinks cabinet

Kohler Bold. Art.

Ever since 1929, when its black plumbing fixtures were put on permanent display at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kohler has had a devoted and rewarding engagement with artists and the art world.

Kohler Asia Pacific's art program, entitled Bold. Art., was launched in 2011 with a remit to support regional artists for mutual inspiration and provide a platform promoting Asian art and culture, showcasing the artists' work on an international stage.

The current exhibition features 13 artists under 30 who've each responded to a theme of multiculturalism. Having launched in Shanghai in December, the show is traveling around China, South East Asia and the Middle East for the next two years. The brief for the artists was to create artworks consisting of materials that Kohler uses in their factories, based on their interpretations of multiculturalism in their own daily lives and countries – which range from the UAE to Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Japan.

As each society has its own unique multicultural story, the artworks curated for this exhibition reflect each artist's personal views and feelings. Over the next few issues, we'll be highlighting all 13 Bold. Art. artists.

Learn more: www.kohler.design



“It is my attempt to engage in culture through a dialogue of hand-made things.”

NAME: Taqwa Al Naqbi

COUNTRY: United Arab Emirates

RESUME: Taqwa completed a BA in Fine Arts at the College of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Sharjah in 2016. Her works are mostly sculptures that can also incorporate handmade papers and printmaking.

ARTWORK: 'ETHNICITIES'

MATERIAL: Clay

“I became an artist to express ideas through various artworks with a great sense of pride. It is my attempt to engage in culture through a dialogue of handmade things that share emotions and thoughts about the place I am from. The Middle East region has been a melting pot for different cultures across the ages. Accepting the existence of the culture of others and being enriched by it is not a new thing for us.

The blocks in the sculpture represent the cultures that have come to live together in harmony. Arabic society is based on openness and tolerance; this is symbolized by the Arabic phrase I've used, 'we have made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another'.”



*“We replaced words
with clay. The process of
working together created
a dialogue between us.”*

NAME: Kotaro Sakazume

COUNTRY: Japan

RESUME: Kotaro is a Japanese artist who studied ceramic art and design at Musashino Art University in Japan.

ARTWORK: ‘DOUBLE HELIX’

MATERIAL: Local Okinawan clay

“For this exhibition I created a piece called ‘Double Helix’. It’s a piece where two people shape a single piece of clay. I created this artwork in the hope that two different cultures and ideologies can find common ground and strive in the same direction.”

*“The best ideas are
the simple ones that you
realize with purity.”*

NAME: Oliver Tanner

COUNTRY: Australia

RESUME: Oliver is a sculptor and designer who graduated from the National Art School in Sydney, where he lives and works. His practice explores organic forms and shapes through the mediums of steel and bronze.

ARTWORK: ‘INTERWOVEN’

MATERIAL: Cast bronze



“My sculpture for the Bold. Art. program is about the strands of society that separate and tie back together again. The work describes the motion of four equal but different elements through space as a representation of multiculturalism in Australia and the interconnected nature of its communities.”

at 4:04pm

on Tuesday, April 11

in Bristol, UK

MARK BICKERSTAFFE

Director,
New Product Development,
Kohler Co. K&B EMEA
and ASPAC

This year, nine Jaguar cars will start to be delivered to their owners after a production hiatus of sixty years. These continuation XKSS models have been handmade on nine leftover chassis that were rescued from a factory fire and have been

built to the original 1957 specifications. It's just one example of old designs coming back, so how and why are brands looking at their heritage to sell their future? And is it part of a backlash against our ever-accelerating digital culture?



“In a digital world where everything is becoming seamless, automatic and predictive, how are we still able to feel in control and engaged?”



“There are many things coming into play with this Jaguar. The first is a question that every company asks: How do we build the trust and credibility that’s needed to mean something, to stand out in this modern world? Heritage is one way of answering that.

The dichotomy is that the strongest growth markets want modernity: A twenty-something in India doesn’t necessarily care about heritage, what they care about is looking forwards. They are striving to be and do better and aspire to have the quality of life that the modern world can offer.

It’s often when consumers gain experience and perhaps have gone through their second and third cycle of products that values alter. That’s when consumers may look at where a company has come from and some of the less tangible things.

There is a lot of wrestling going on at the moment with both consumers and brands: In a digital world where everything is becoming seamless, done for us, automatic and predictive, how are we still able to feel in control and engaged? Especially with cars, because they are all about freedom. Modern cars lack the level of engagement that you get with the truly analogue XKSS. This car is pure emotional design: It’s handcrafted, everything about it is manual and tactile; it’s the epitome of the industrial revolution with its engineering authenticity.

We have to be cognizant that there’s also a somewhat cynical side to this. There are more millionaires and billionaires than ever before, many of whom are seeking the ultimate in exclusive products. There’s a bucket list of the rarest and most desirable and there aren’t enough to go round – so this is also feeding wealthy self-expression.

We are part of a generation where we have to work out whether we should keep reinventing and redesigning everything around us *ad infinitum* when the products we make don’t really wear out anymore. If we’re just changing for the sake of change, that is unsustainable.

What we’re seeing is a transition to a different mode of living where you have the instant and consumable but you also seek the authentic and the long lasting – and finding a balance between the two for your own personal life.

You saw it with Miuccia Prada who was photographed at New York Fashion Week in February wearing a coat from her 2007 collection. She’s making a statement on the timeless nature of the coat’s design, whilst at the same time selling a brand new collection.

The bottom line is humans need space and time as well as engagement and involvement; the human brain can’t be consistently bombarded with energy and inputs and expect to get a consistent output. It’s not a machine. We need rest. We have a need for things to slow us down, a call for slower living.

The new Nokia is interesting – the relaunch of the budget 3310 phone, 17 years after it first debuted. They’re trading on a niche – offering something different and fun to those who don’t remember it, but also those who grew up with the phone the first time around and aren’t technologists

remember and value the simplicity. What may happen is that the Nokia becomes a second or third phone – you’d sling it into your bag as a holiday phone, especially as its main benefit is battery life. Similarly, there’s the Punkt phone from Switzerland designed by Jasper Morrison, which can only make and receive calls and texts. It is unashamedly modern, simple, intuitive design, no nostalgia, and shows how people are balancing different speeds and different modes of life with their purchases.

On a similar theme there’s a trend in hotels of being insulated from the outside world – no wifi, no phone signal – you’re deliberately isolated from the hustle of the modern world. And that’s the selling point, because otherwise people aren’t ever escaping – you’ve always got that thing in your pocket that beeps. At these hotels you choose to disconnect and slow down, and that leads us to the question about what is modern luxury? Modern luxury is time, the thing you can’t buy.

And if time is the one thing that you can’t buy, then this Jaguar is a time machine. They are selling their history and heritage and a way of experiencing another age. It’s not part of the modern world: It won’t have bluetooth connectivity, you would not even be able to hear your voice because the car is so loud, and it’s so engaging you can’t even contemplate taking your hand off the wheel and texting.

Jaguar is doing exactly the same thing as Miuccia Prada – demonstrating how well made and emotional the brand’s old designs are in order to try and demonstrate that this heritage directly filters down to its current cars. But for this to work the company needs to have a worthy heritage in the first place and not all brands are able to boast that.”

at 2:11pm
on Monday, April 17
in Valencia, Spain

XAVIER MONSALVATJE

Resident Artist
at the Kohler Factory

Arts/Industry is the residency art program conceived and managed by the John Michael Arts Center in Wisconsin since 1974 and open to artists worldwide. It allows artists the opportunity to work within the main factory, making industrial technologies and facilities available to them during long term residencies as well as short term workshops and tours.

Spanish artist Xavier Monsalvatje was a resident artist at the end of last year for two months, working on his hand-painted designs and being inspired by the industry of the factory around him.

“I like to work in different art techniques but ceramics is my favorite medium. When I am working on new pieces I always try to show what is happening around me. You know, you are watching the news on TV or listening to the radio and you think, ‘I need to explain my feelings about this’. The world is mad and art is the best remedy for this sickness.

I was born in Godella, a small town near Valencia, growing up next to an industrial area. I remember that all around me were huge chimneys, wires, pipes and storehouses and even a shipyard. It was amazing for me – in my mind it became another city. Then I started to play with these elements like a game. In my work I mix my memories, the news and everything inside of this imaginary city. Industrialization has been my inspiration for a long time maybe because industrial architecture has modified the landscape and social movements amongst many other things. We are sons of the Industrial Revolution.

Ceramics is very special for me. My older brother is a ceramics teacher and he taught me that the process is distinctive, because you learn to be patient, tidy and precise. The feeling when you are firing, and two days later when you open the kiln, is so

special. But it’s not always great... Sometimes you need to throw a piece away and start again. So when you work in ceramics, it is habitual to have different kinds of surprises, but at Kohler I had good luck. There were many good professionals in the factory who were available anytime to help me.

I don’t have a preference for any specific clay. There are many kinds and choosing one depends on what I want to make. And again with the layers of paint and glaze, it depends on the technique you use. You can paint on top of the glaze or under, but the most important thing is to have a clear idea in mind and an image of what you want to narrate.

I love to work with a blue or black color on white clay because it is a traditional technique. In ceramics, a porcelain piece painted with cobalt blue is amazing.

The Kohler residency is unique within industrial factories; it’s a great experience for an artist. Because the residents’ workspace is in the same location as the workers’ space, it creates interesting collaborations. During the residency, I better understood their working processes. It was like a laboratory and I learned a lot. To be there is like having a brainstorm every day, so you need to be focused.

Two months in ceramics is not time enough for some projects, so I made a decision to paint and draw the Kohler products using images of the factory, buildings, objects and tools. It was a tribute to the workers.”

Created in Arts/Industry, a long-term residency program of the John Kohler Arts Center (www.jmkac.org) in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Arts/Industry takes place at Kohler Co. Learn more: www.kohler.design

Photography: SCOTT SEIFERT



*“The feeling when you open
the kiln is so special.”*

at 3:08pm

on Thursday, February 23

in Hong Kong

PIERRE PERUSSET

General Manager,
Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong



Nine years ago, Ritz-Carlton closed one of their hotels – their sole Hong Kong property which had been operating for 15 years. But there were two good reasons for its early demise: Firstly, its small size had made it uncompetitive and secondly, they had a much bigger plan for its replacement.

Three years later, in 2011, they unveiled the new Hong Kong Ritz-Carlton, occupying the top 17 floors of the International Commerce Centre (ICC), at the time the fourth highest skyscraper in the world. But much more importantly, Ritz-Carlton now boasted the highest hotel in the world, an important cachet and marketing tool for the brand.

The ICC building is a mixed-use tower designed by architects Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), who's founding Design Partner is William Pedersen:

“We won the competition to design the ICC in late 2000, and a hotel was always a part of the program. The concept behind the design of the ICC was to connect the ground with the sky and the water – the three main elements

of Hong Kong. It was also designed to complement César Pelli's existing International Finance Centre (IFC) tower, which is similar in scale, so the two could frame the gateway to Victoria Harbor. Ritz-Carlton asked for a dramatic experience which enabled their guests to view the Hong Kong skyline from a unique perspective.”

Creating 21st Century tourist and leisure attractions is about superlatives: The best, the highest, the first. This is the language that hotel brands use to mark out their territory and rivalry against each other. For the guest, the benefit is clear – a high hotel offers great views and the prestige of waking up and seeing the city beneath you. But after several years' experience, what is it like to work in such a high environment on a day-to-day basis? Pierre Perusset, General Manager of the Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong is the man to ask:

“We don't have problems, we have challenges. Because although we're in the center of Hong Kong, we are also an island on our own at the top of a huge building. This means that the most important feature for us are the lifts – there are 80 in total, servicing the hotel, the offices, the mall and train station.

The lifts act like a vertical subway, so getting the lift in this building is like getting the train commute to work. We rely on them to deliver food, supplies and people. So our biggest challenge is how to function when we can't rely on the lifts, something that happens when there is a typhoon. Depending on the force of the winds, we either have to shut off the big shuttle lift [from the ninth floor entrance to the main lobby on floor 103] because of the sway of the building, or we slow them down or use the shorter lifts. You can still reach the top, but you need to take several lifts to do so.”

The idea of a vertical MRT as an essential transport is the same for all tall towers, including the brand new Shanghai Tower. Designed by US architects Gensler, it will open properly later this year and at 632 meters and 128 floors high, will be the second tallest building in the world. And as the current vogue dictates, it will house a hotel – in this case a 258-room property operated by Chinese state-owned hoteliers Jin Jiang. Will this new hotel threaten Pierre Perusset's Ritz-Carlton?

“Although we're in the center of Hong Kong, we are also like an island – we're on our own at the top of a huge building.”



“Ritz-Carlton asked for a dramatic experience which enabled their guests to view the Hong Kong skyline from a unique perspective.”



Above:
Chef Paul Lau

“Ah yes, the Shanghai Tower. We might have been worried that we’d lose our crown, but that hotel is actually below us [it’s located between the 84th and 110th floors]. They’ve already announced it as the second highest in the world, because they’ve decided not to put the hotel on the very top of their building. So we’ll be the highest for a little while longer.”

The Ritz-Carlton also boasts three other ‘world’s highest’: The spa designed by HBA on the 116th floor, which recently redeveloped its treatments; and then the Ozone Bar, designed by Tokyo’s Wonderwall, and the swimming pool both on the top 118th floor, which has a unique LED screen at one end and on the ceiling, displaying images of bubbles, swimming fish and sandy beaches.

Part of KPF’s overall brief was creating exterior terraces at the topmost pool and bar level, which allows for open air space for drinking and also an outdoor hot tub, even if the swimming pool itself is kept indoors. (There is a bar in Dubai’s Burj Khalifa on a higher numeric floor, but actually it is on a lower altitude because the height of each floor in that building is different.)

Catering and kitchen preparations at this height also bring about challenges for the hotel’s six restaurants, ten kitchens and 125 chefs. All produce and ingredients have to come from the ground floor via service elevators to the main kitchens up in the clouds and it can take five to fifteen minutes to load trolleys and arrive. And then for the chefs, the culture of working everyday at such a high level is similar to that what you’d find on an airplane. Chef Paul Lau has been in

charge of the hotel’s Cantonese restaurant, Tin Lung Heen, since the opening in 2011 and has overseen every detail:

“The temperature and air pressure is slightly different at this height so we had to develop the menu and techniques to get certain things exactly right, for example frying the deep fried crispy chicken. It’s important to get everything right, as we make all the dishes on this 102nd floor – nothing is brought up prepared.”

It is that attention to detail that has led to the success of the restaurant and the awarding of two Michelin stars for the fifth year in a row.

The future of our cities is high-rise, for living, working and leisure, but also for cities to forge their own identity and branding. And hotels will occupy more and more of this high ground as Pierre Perusset knows only too well:

“Working in any high hotel is unique. And with the amazing views and the challenges, I think managing this hotel is the best job in the world. It even keeps me fit. My office is on the 117th floor, so I often walk the hotel, up or down, using the staircases. It’s great exercise!”

Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong

312 Rooms

Architects: Kohn Pederson Fox (USA)

Public areas, Café 103, Rooms & Suites: LTW Designworks (Singapore)

Spa: Hirsch Bedner Associates (USA)

Restaurants on Level 102: SPIN (Japan)

Ozone bar (Level 118): Wonderwall (Japan)



Top:
The swimming pool
on the 118th floor

Bottom left:
Spa reception with chandelier
designed by Eva Menz

Bottom right:
Deluxe Suite



CREATIVE CITY PORTFOLIO

**WELCOME
TO
DUBAI**

WHEN WILL YOU RE

RETURN

“When we discussed Dubai as a creative destination to explore, we were going on a hunch. That beyond the clichéd travel stories, shiny façades and global preconceptions, there were human stories to be told about the city’s creative community.

There are also historical and geographic preconceptions to overcome: Lazy journalism will tell you that Dubai didn’t exist before the 1970s’ oil boom. Certainly its growth and international stature has happened quickly, but the area had a rich pearling and trading community for hundreds of years that lasted up to the introduction of the cultured pearl in the 1920s.

Then where is Dubai? The Middle East is not a fitting locator in a post-colonial world, naming a place only in relation to the West, specifically London’s Greenwich meridian.

The UN refers to the region as ‘Western Asia’, in which case Dubai, sitting on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is its *de facto* capital city.

A place that’s asserting itself as a politically stable hub at the crossroads between three continents: How could it not support a creative community?

So this is our snap shot of Dubai: No supertall buildings, man-made islands or desert treks. Instead we found an incredibly cosmopolitan, entrepreneurial and bold society. A community acutely aware of the global prejudices and preconceptions of their city as a hollow oasis of riches but working hard to nurture their individual creative lives and allowing their collective work to redefine Dubai in the eyes of the world.

The Circle Game (2016) by Mary Ellen Carroll takes the form of two large LED signs on the roofs over Alserkal Avenue, one asking ‘When did you arrive’ and the other, ‘When will you return’, questions that speak directly to the nature of the region as a crossroads, from nomadic tribes to silk route traders to today’s stopover tourists.

at 10:45am
on Sunday, March 5
in Dubai

RASHID AND AHMED

BIN SHABIB

Brownbook magazine



“Dubai is the ultimate hub.”

Above:
The *Brownbook* meeting
table, top left Ahmed and
top right Rashid

Right:
Inn The Park

Opposite page:
Brownbook back issues in
the Khazzan Park library





Twin brothers Rashid and Ahmed's bi-monthly magazine *Brownbook* is one of the world's great publications. A beautifully curated guide to contemporary society, design and culture in the Middle East and North Africa, it manages to be as surprising and modern as it is authentic and traditional. It challenges preconceptions whilst documenting and forging a modern identity for the region. Themed back issues have included snow in Saudi Arabia, the Arab community in Brazil, Persian brutalist architecture in Tehran and an urban guide to Khartoum.

Their office in the business and cultural hub of Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC) is both familial and scholarly. During the day, meetings are held al fresco on a huge wood table surrounded by pot plants and books, whilst inside the editorial and research team plot their way through future publications.

“We have two big meetings a year, where we decide on the next three issues. We look at the region each issue from a different perspective – a progressive, modern look at cultural life in the Middle East. But we do look at stories from a wider

area – from Istanbul in the north to the Maldives in the south, from north Africa in the west to Pakistan and parts of India in the east, as well as looking at the diaspora around the world. And of course Dubai is at the center of all this.

But the magazine is only one public side of what we do – we're also involved in urbanism, researching and documenting life here.”

Urbanism is the key word, as the brothers are involved in their own architecture projects and urban interventions through their company Studio Cultural Engineering, the newest of which opened late last year and perfectly illustrates their pluralistic talents.

They repurposed the small Khazzan Park, a green space in one of Dubai's oldest residential neighborhoods, creating solar-powered coral-stone buildings to house a great café, Inn The Park; an events space and an excellent library, curated by themselves. The project typifies their continuing commitment to creating engaging social, urban environments for communities and educational resources.

at 5:11pm

on Thursday, March 2

in Dubai

PABLO DEL VAL

International Director,
Art Dubai

Pablo del Val is sitting in the offices of Art Dubai watching the rain fall:

“The main thing about this city is people’s preconceptions of it – money flying out the windows, everything bling bling – but it’s not like that at all. People don’t even realize it rains here!”

Madrid-born del Val arrived following tenure as Artistic Director

of Mexico City’s Zona Maco Art Fair, fully open for a change of experiences.

“People who haven’t been here don’t realize what a cosmopolitan place it is – you’ll find over 200 nationalities living in this small city and this is reflected in our galleries and artists. There is a big creative diaspora and not just from the Middle East and North Africa.”

March is art month in Dubai, which is his busiest month. His role is to sell Art Dubai, the local arts fair, to galleries around the world, but he acknowledges it also means selling Dubai as a destination.

“I see Art Dubai as an umbrella and a catalyzer. We can bring together the art community not just commercially, but as a think tank, with interactions and meetings. It is an amazing time of possibilities, a get-together locally to build a platform internationally.

We host galleries from 44 countries – that’s almost twice what the international art fairs can boast. But at the same time the atmosphere isn’t the rush rush of the New York or London fairs. There’s much more space and time to meet and discuss.

Things move fast here and it’s not just assimilating what’s going on elsewhere, there’s a sense that culture is being created here. I feel Dubai has been growing in a really courageous way with its own codes and energies. Also more people come these days with long term plans to work on fascinating things and be part of the city. You don’t come here to impose who you are and where you’ve come from, you come here to learn and to open yourself and absorb the culture.

It’s a nomadic place and that sensibility and mentality applies to everything that happens here. That is the nice thing about Dubai – we’re all nomads.”

“You don’t come here to impose who you are, you come here to learn and absorb the culture.”



at 4:09pm

on Monday, February 13

in Dubai

SUNNY RAHBAR

Co-Founder,
Third Line Gallery



“Dubai’s arts scene has changed completely.”

Iranian-born Sunny Rahbar is a well-known figure on the international art circuit having previously worked in New York before moving to Dubai to set up the Third Line Gallery, successfully being one of the city’s avant-guardians for the last twelve years.

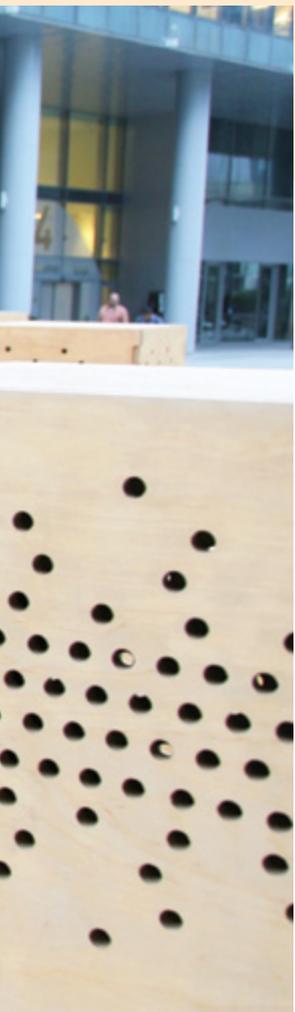
“When we opened in 2005, we were the first Dubai gallery to engage with the younger generation of contemporary artists from the Arab world and North Africa. Two years ago, we moved into a larger space and are now surrounded by many new galleries in Alserkal Avenue. It’s become an art destination.

In those twelve years, Dubai’s arts scene has changed completely – there are new initiatives supported by the city and it’s become a great location for galleries to operate. It is politically and economically stable, a big travel hub and an important marketplace

for arts in the region, but Dubai is not a place where artists live and work.

It’s difficult for many artists to come here – there are visa regulations and it isn’t the cheapest city in the world, which means you won’t find a large community of artists here. But it’s not an impossible thing to imagine in the future. It’s an ongoing process and you have to remember that none of this creative infrastructure existed ten years ago.

For example, Art Dubai has become very important and is the central moment of the year for us, bringing in collectors and art professionals from around the world. It’s actually grown to become an entire art month for the city. Beyond the commercial aspects of the art fair it has provided the city’s art industry with a platform and a meeting place. There is a real feeling that the future of art in Dubai will be positive for us all.”



at 3:55pm
on Wednesday, March 1
in Dubai

MAITHA DEMITHAN

Artist

Since her first gallery show in 2009, Maitha Demithan's instantly recognizable high-contrast figurative scans have made her one of the Emirates' rising art stars:

"I've always been interested in people and in the human condition. It started in high school where I was very much interested in painting faces; I was naturally drawn to it. We didn't have life models and drawing the human figure wasn't encouraged. I found myself constantly trying to find few ways of doing it.

When I started scanography I started with a self-portrait and then moved to family members. I like to scan people I know and feel a connection with, as I don't feel comfortable with strangers, unless I have done a few sittings beforehand and feel that it has gone well. I love the scanning process because of its open-ended nature and you can never predict the outcome.

A flatbed scanner is normally used for the reproduction of two-dimensional images or to make a copy from an original. In my pieces, I have scanned figures in parts and then reconstructed the images digitally. The composite result is both an objective and mechanical record of the figures but it also, through pose, body language and particular scan quality, is a record of the 'conversation' and often has an emotive quality.

I scan a figure in parts using an A4 flatbed scanner. I then look at the images I have gathered and sketch out some ideas. I let the process dictate to me the direction that the final piece will go in.

Sometimes during the scan the model might say something or inspire me in a certain way at which stage a new direction is born. After an initial sketch is thought out, I start constructing the portrait by creating a collage from all the scanned resources, selecting or rejecting each scan. I look at the quality of each image before I start constructing. What does each image say? How does it say it? How does it connect to the others?"

She is highly honest about the level of art in the UAE and while everyone, including her, remarks on the fast progress in the art market, she is able to highlight the deficiencies as well.

"I feel that the work created in the Emirates at the moment is progressing slowly but when compared to international art, including my own work, it needs to be stronger – both conceptually and technique-wise.

There also still needs to be more focus on education and this is what will affect further growth in the area. Education is as important as exhibiting. You cannot write a book if you cannot read. You cannot 'see' a visual unless you know the visual language, and education gives us the opportunities needed to immerse in the learning of this language. Emirati artists should be constantly reading about art and visiting museums, which is one of the best sources to learn from and improve one's own work. On museum walls we can find free advice and solutions. I look forward to the opening of the Guggenheim and the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, a treasure yet to be unveiled."

"Education is as important as exhibiting."



Above:
Aiyal
Scanography;
90 x 76 cm, 2012



Left:
To The Moon
Scanography;
180 x 122 cm, 2009

at 11:11am

on Thursday, March 2

in Dubai

TOBIAS GIBREEL,

JULIA VOLET

Volet Florists

The heat outside the building where Volet is based is oppressive; Dubai's scorching summer is just around the corner. Inside the florist store though the air is cool and filled with verdant fragrance. Vases of South African bush flowers and European meadow flowers fill the space.

Business partners Sudanese-German Tobias and Russian Julia met at a food fair in Dubai a few years back and started talking about scented candles, a conversation that led them to opening up a florist shop in the middle of the desert. Their success happened because they provide a different type of floristry than the hotel lobby variety that is so pervasive in Dubai.

Julia: "My background is in chemical engineering but my passion is scent and I've always wanted to do something creative with it. Neither of us had a floristry background but we were both interested in it as an art. We felt nobody was addressing that here and we were right. We're educating our clients away from the corporate cliché, showing them how you can have flowers at home as well, which has never been so common. So our arrangements are less architectural, they're informal and rustic – we use a lot of wildflowers."

Tobias' journey has been longer, having left Sudan as a child, the whole family driving to Germany, and then his onward adventures in London before moving to Dubai.



“I have a lot of friends in London and they say: ‘Why are you in Dubai – isn’t it just fancy cars?’”

Tobias: "In London, I was an actor, an interior designer, and a fashion buyer but I can tell you of all the jobs I've had, this is the most exciting because I'm building something. Perseverance and dedication will take you a long way – and luck and talent. Also the time is right to start things here now. Compared to 2002, which was my first visit, it is a completely different city. Back then there were only three places to go: 5-star hotels, the airport and Deira, the old town. Now there are edgy urban restaurants, little pop-ups, cool design shops... I see a

huge growth in productivity, culture and design.

I have a lot of friends in London and they say: 'Why are you in Dubai – isn't it just fancy cars?' But it's a whole scene, one that is supported by the government. The difference is that in other countries, creative neighborhoods developed naturally. Whereas in Dubai we live in the middle of the desert so the government has to create places. It may seem forced but it's the only way to do it."



at 3:16pm
on Wednesday, March 1
in Dubai

LEILA ANTAKLY

General Manager,
Wilhelmina Models

Leila Antaly arrived in Dubai from New York four years ago, seeing the city as a new frontier to explore and ready to revitalize the burgeoning but still rather amateur modeling industry.

“My father is Syrian and I grew up in the States, so coming here was me wanting to connect more with my roots. I realized there was a lot going on and was interested to see it.

Four years later and we’re still the only international agency in the Middle East. We’ve helped bring industry standards up, introducing practices like standard fees and basic usage rights.

A lot of talent has moved here as well: International photographers, stylists, models come for the editorial and commercial possibilities plus there are great shooting locations.

People abroad complain that there’s no culture in Dubai and I think everyone here is trying hard to show that there is. We don’t have the history of culture, but there is huge interest in the arts, fashion and photography. People here are even interested in talking about the taboos. It’s not as censored as people think.

I feel that in the U.S. and Europe everything has already happened. Here it’s different: It’s a place where there’s encouragement to make things happen and it’s easy to be proactive, whereas the rest of the world feels on stand by.”



“It’s a frontier. We’re here because we want to achieve something.”

at 1:56pm

on Thursday, March 2

in Dubai

TARA YOUNG

Resident Artistic Director,
La Perle

In a large sound stage in Dubai's Studio City, where *Star Trek Beyond* was filmed, there are over fifty athletes and acrobats in training. There's a thud of activity as people tumble, jump into the pool and catch each other in midair. Standing in the middle is Tara Young who's worked for 25 years as an Artistic Director on Broadway and on international Cirque shows.

She's now in Dubai as the Resident Artistic Director of La Perle. Produced by Artistic Director Franco Dragone, who made his name directing *Cirque du Soleil*, La Perle is acrobatic theater plus water.

The whole experience has been created around a new bespoke 1,300 seat theater surrounding a 2.7 million liter 'aqua-stage', which can change magically from a huge pool to a dry stage and back again.

"I'm part of a huge team here, an incredible group of people from 23 different countries working together. By the time we open in August, we'll

have had ten months of training. To put that into perspective, a Broadway show rehearses for five weeks, you tech the show for three weeks, preview for three weeks and then you have the opening night. Here, it's a whole different process. After the training, Franco, who's the genius behind all of this, will come for three months to finalize the story, and then we'll go straight into opening."

La Perle has analogies with the brand new Dubai Opera. Both are targeted at extending Dubai's cultural life into the night.

"I went to see *Les Miserables* at the Dubai Opera, which is extraordinary but a whole different experience to coming to La Perle. Both are groundbreaking for this region, but when you come to us, you'll see a production you've never seen before.

You're gonna be amazed when you see people flying into the water from 23 meters high. *Dragone* has already done five previous astonishing water shows around the world. We're so excited to be here to perform the sixth, and to do ten shows a week. It's the first time this region will experience something this theatrically amazing."



"You're gonna see people flying into the water from 23 meters high."

at 4:16pm

on Sunday, March 5

in Dubai

KENZA & PATRICK

JARJOUR

Cuisine Provocateurs,
Inked

“We’re fed up with replicating things from abroad. We in Dubai can come up with our own ideas.”



In the heart of Alserkal Avenue, full of grey corrugated warehouses, home to art galleries, is a restaurant called Inked. Except it’s not a restaurant as owners Kenza and Patrick Jarjour point out.

“Inked is a creative platform, strongly driven by a food experience. It is how we show art that’s expressed through food. But it’s not a restaurant, we insist on that. It was actually the name of our first pop-up: ‘This is not a restaurant’.

What we do is put on private and public events, we were never interested in creating a day-in-day-out regular eating experience.

Our next pop-up, for instance, is inspired by Dali’s 1973 cookbook and is in cooperation with Christian Louboutin. We’re going to have painting, sculpture and furniture – plus original Dali works. You’re not going to be able to recognize the place, you’ll be immersed in his world. The space itself here is a blank canvas, so we can adapt it for every new event. We have two kitchens, the smaller one upstairs is a laboratory,

which can be used for menu engineering for other restaurants, photo shoots, chef’s table – we’re always open to new ideas.”

‘New ideas’ is a phrase that crops up a lot. The Jarjours are very aware of the preconception of Dubai as a cultural desert, but are at the vanguard of its strikingly original creative scene.

“Dubai has changed a lot for the better, it’s more interesting and there are now people who actually want to invest their time and energy and effort into being here. You really feel that the dynamics have changed, people want to settle and build a life. Ten years ago people would come for one or two years and then leave. But the recession helped a lot: It meant the people who stayed really stuck it out and were then able to contribute.”

With a steady stream of events planned throughout 2017, their favorite still is their first, the manifesto-setting ‘This is not a restaurant’.

“The food was classic Dubai cliché – at that time it felt that every restaurant served burrata salad, truffle pizza, miso black cod and a fondant. And so we played on that and reconstructed it into one menu; the burrata salad was an icecream and the truffle pizza was a drink...

The rule we had and which we’ve continued with all our events is when you enter there is no one to greet you, there are no chairs by the tables, you have to stand and you have to start to talk to other guests. Then slowly we’ll get more involved, the chairs come out, strangers start to eat together.

We don’t even have an alcohol license, our events are always dry, which on the one hand makes it a bigger challenge, but then we found our guests are more focused on the experience and it’s special. It’s not just another night out.”

at 9:39am

on Thursday, March 9

in Dubai

BJÖRN SCHÜTRUMPF

Picture Editor,
Vogue Arabia

BIANCA HARTKOPF

Hair & Make-up Artist,
Image-Maker

German-born Björn and South African Bianca are recent arrivals in Dubai having moved from Mumbai last October. Bianca works on visual projects with clients including Dior and Chanel, while her boyfriend Björn works at *Vogue Arabia*, which launched in March to worldwide acclaim. Their recent transition allows them to contrast their initial impressions with a more informed understanding of their new home.

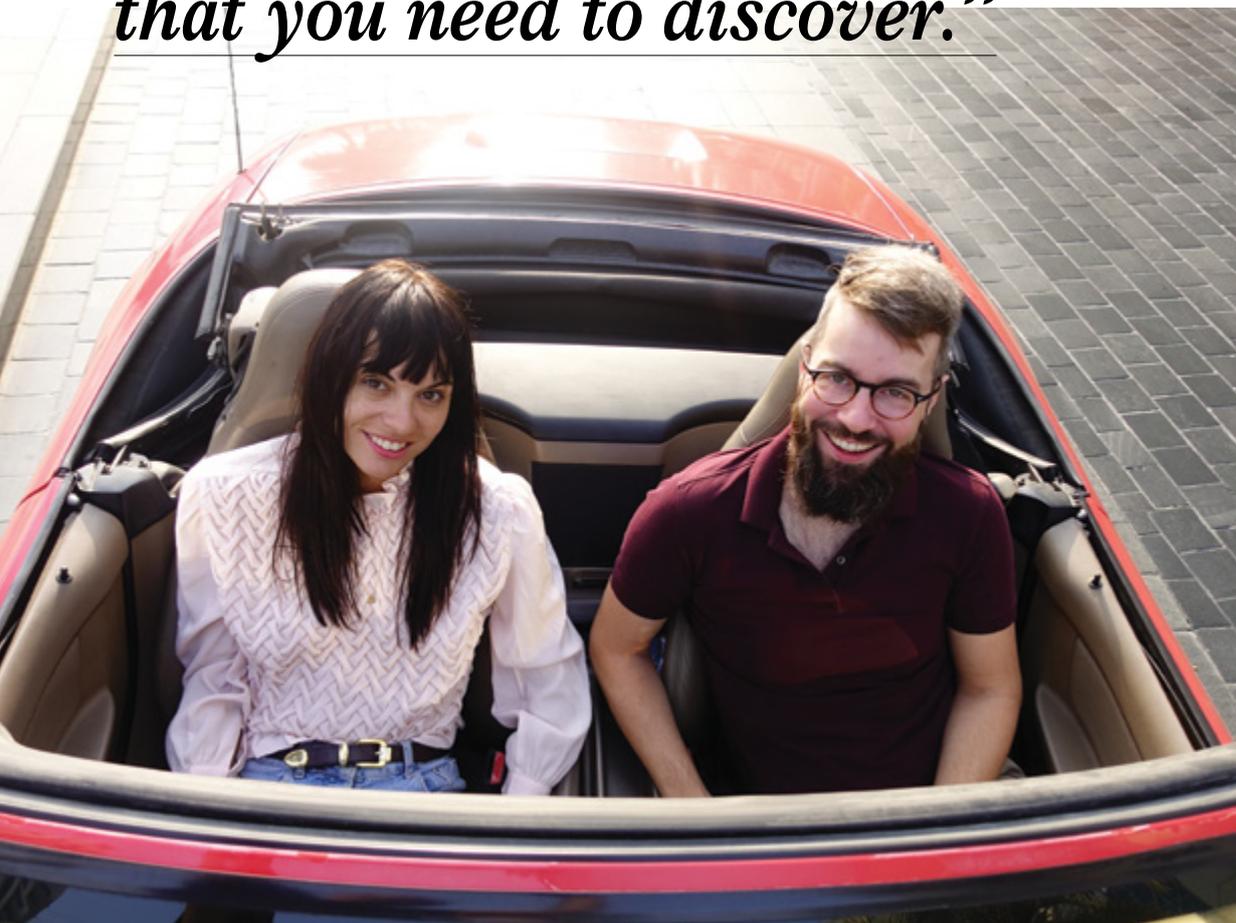
“It just looks like a desert when you land, but there’s an arts scene in the midst of this one-dimensional flashy world that people think Dubai solely is. It may be a little underground but, if you look, you’ll find local neighborhoods with character.

It’s also a very cosmopolitan city and not just Western ex-pats – it’s a real mix, there’s an amazing Filipino community here, lots of really super-talented Filipino photographers.

The postcard city looks glitzy and glam but there’s a lot of texture hiding behind it. There’s a rawness that you need to discover. You need to be prepared to look and search it out, especially off the beaten track, places like the old part, Bur Dubai. And then apart from these local neighborhoods you have the new developments, with government money being spent on creative centers, D3 for example, [Dubai Design District].

New pop-up shops are opening there almost on a daily basis, both the *Vogue* and Art Dubai offices are in D3, but the area is just one tenth of what it will be, so there are a lot of empty premises. They are giving young creatives a spot to showcase their talents with these pop-ups and they’re also building art residences, so I feel the community is growing slowly but surely.”

*“There’s a rawness
that you need to discover.”*



at 1:56pm

on Thursday, March 2

in Dubai

SAMIRA MAHBOUB

Model and
Performance Artist

Munich-born, German-Moroccan Samira has been traveling and modeling for the last three years following her MA in London on Gender Studies with a focus on post-colonial theory. Now in Dubai and signed to Wilhelmina models, she marries her fashion work with performance art as part of art-duo Samania.

“I could be working in New York, Paris or Hamburg, but there is so much that’s happening in Dubai. The city is really creating its own narrative and character without trying to be so Western all the time.

I work with an American friend, Ania Catherine, who’s an artist and choreographer, as a way of visually translating the subjects we studied together, working mainly in film and performance to explore gender, sexuality and post-colonial theory.

Similarly, I see a lot of young women in their twenties coming to Dubai from diverse Arabic backgrounds to produce and create work here. For example, I shot a lookbook recently for an emerging young designer, Lama Jouni, whose new collection is inspired by the French colonization of Lebanon.

That is exactly what this place can offer – young Arab women can come here and have a voice and find a platform to express themselves. I find it fascinating and it’s one of the reasons I’m here as well: To contribute and be a participant in this cultural transformation that I see happening.”



“Young Arab women can come here and have a voice and find a platform.”

at 2:33pm

on Thursday, March 9

in Dubai

CARLO STRAGIOTTO

General Manager,
Four Seasons DIFC



Arriving at Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC), the city's new business district, is disconcerting. It's just that you presume you'll be arriving at a financial district and are expecting it to look like the stereotype – concrete piazzas, foreboding public art, anonymous high-rises. But instead you encounter small parks and squares, low-rise buildings, a large number of restaurants, cafes and international art galleries, plus the Four Seasons hotel, which opened last year. Most surprisingly, you find a community.

The General Manager, Carlo Stragiotto, is evangelical about the area and its future potential.

“This place isn't just a business area, it's turning more and more into an arts and lifestyle hub as well. We're positioned very close to both the airport and downtown, and they're constructing an annex Gate Avenue to be finished next year with more retail and residential space.”

This last point is key because the addition of apartments means that unlike other cities' business districts, DIFC is still bustling out of office hours and on the weekends (Friday and Saturday in Dubai).

“The whole area is great to live and work in because they've made it fully pedestrian. All the services are provided by roads underneath what we call the Podium Level, which is where we all commute on foot. The developers have been successful in building a community here – there's interaction in the public spaces with the 600 companies already here, especially with a year round calendar of events, and the plan is by 2025 to build that up to 8,000 companies. It is and will be a great mixture of business, art and fine restaurants.”

The hotel, a surprisingly boutique offering from Four Seasons only containing 106 rooms, is the heart of the district, with its Firebird Diner

terrace open to the public and a Poltrona Frau fitted cigar room, The Churchill Club, specifically catering to local CEOs.

Adam Tihany, founder of the New York and Rome based design studio Tihany Design was commissioned for the interiors: Restaurants, bars, public spaces and guestrooms, and has provided the property with a thoughtful, relaxed ambience which reflects the atmosphere of the DIFC:

“The city of Dubai as we know it was built in pursuit of 'biggest and best' – each building more impressive than the last. The Four Seasons DIFC was designed for a self-assured generation – one that prefers a sense of luxury that whispers, not shouts. The hotel speaks to a new way of thinking in Dubai. It is an intimately scaled, bespoke oasis with a very personal, handcrafted quality.”

The hotel has many excellent design touches that reflect its small size and international stature. Guestrooms are spacious with large bathrooms and shower rooms, while the rooftop is a particular highlight, dominated by a glass pool lined with cabanas and attended by a small bar. It's not a big pool, but it is very striking.

Adam's son, artist Bram Tihany, was commissioned to produce photographic artwork – excellent photo collages of Dubai's architecture twisted into organic shapes, which never feel cliché. He also made the metallic car sculptures on the wall of the American style diner on the podium level. Having a 1950s style diner with booths and a checkerboard floor in a Four Seasons anywhere else would feel incongruent, but here it speaks of a quiet confidence, that not everything has to be posh – which exists as well of course. The Luna Sky Bar and its terrace have custom seating in gold, yellow and brown hues that fill the space with warmth and personality – much like the hotel in general.

Pool photography: ERIC LAIGNEL



*“This place isn’t
just a business area,
it’s an arts and
lifestyle hub.”*



Above and right:
DIFC

Middle:
The Four Seasons' pool

Four Seasons Dubai DIFC

106 Rooms

Consultant Engineer: ERGA (Lebanon)

Interiors: Tihany Design (USA)

Spa Fixtures: Kohler (USA)

at 6:09pm

on Monday, March 13

in Dubai

VILMA JURKUTE

Director,
Alserkal Avenue



Photography: HELGA TRAXLER

*“In 2010 we had six art spaces;
today we’re a whole art district.”*



“Alserkal Avenue is situated in Al Quoz, the industrial area of Dubai. It’s a mix of old and new – car warehouse meets art gallery.

In 2010 we had six art spaces; today with the support of our founder, Abdelmonem Bin Eisa Alserkal, we’re a whole art district and the region’s most influential cultural destination.

It is particularly important to note that at a time when commerce and profit have become the norm, we also have not-for-profit initiatives and foundations, which strengthen the infrastructure for the arts as a whole. Dubai’s arts ecosystem, which started with just a few commercial art

galleries a decade ago, has grown to become a holistic art scene. Locally-based talent is more able than ever to develop their artistic practices since there is now the infrastructure to support that.

With this growing grassroots culture in mind, we just inaugurated Concrete (the first project by Rem Koolhaas’ OMA in the UAE), a multi-disciplinary space dedicated to museum grade exhibitions and alternative programming. This provides even more support to Dubai’s cultural producers, enabling us to further develop the city’s art program at large.”

The eve of this year's Dubai Art Week saw the opening of Concrete, Alserkal Avenue's new public gallery space, designed by Rem Koolhaas' OMA. We asked visitors during Galleries Night for their views on the art district's community and output.



1



2



3

1. **DAPHNE TARANTO AND ANTHONY TINO, USA, Founders of the book fair, Fully Booked** “Fully Booked will be the UAE’s first exhibition and fair featuring artists, designers, creatives and publishers who are producing and working in printed matter. The fair has been extremely well received so far and we are very excited to premiere during Art Week in Dubai this year in Alserkal Avenue.” 2. **LISA ANDERSON, United Kingdom, Curator** “I’m excited to discover the community of artists and galleries on Alserkal Avenue as I’ve been told it’s at the heart of Dubai’s contemporary art scene.” 3. **HISHAM FAGHEEH, Saudi Arabia, Actor/Comedian** “Alserkal is super important. It supports independent movies, creates an environment where you can just feel the energy, there are creative people, food is great. I fundamentally appreciate this public space.”

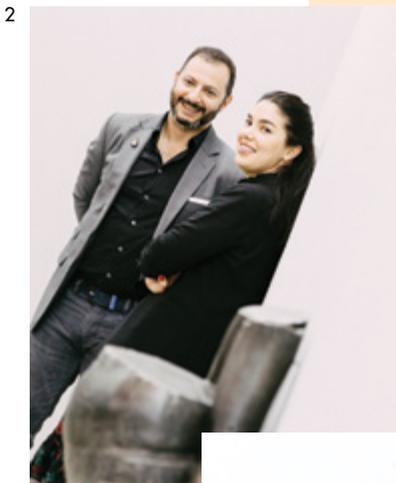


1



“It is a bubble within Dubai’s art scene. Honest, accessible and above all unpretentious.”

ISABEL PINTADO, Spain
Senior VP & MD,
Middle East and Africa at Wilson Associates



2

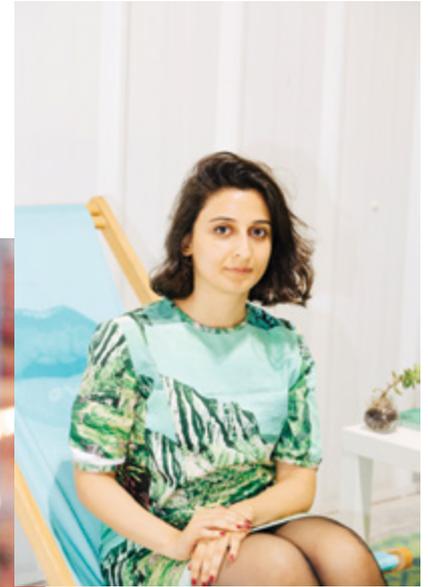


3

1. RABI GEORGES, Germany, Project Manager – Programming, Alserkal “Alserkal Avenue is the only cultural hub in the region that embraces everyone. I always came here to experience the most genuine arts community in Dubai. It’s accessible to anyone regardless of the social status. Then I joined the team to manage the production of artist commissions and to boost the educational outreach. I work closely with our commissioned artists, community members, professors, university students and the general public.” 2. KOUROSH NOURI AND NADINE KNOTZER, Austria, Gallerists Carbon 12 “We are excited about the growth, about the international art being shown. Alserkal Avenue is the arts and culture hotspot in the region as well as the home of Carbon 12 and all its represented artists.” 3. SARA RAHBAR, Iran, Artist represented by Carbon 12 “I enjoy the conscious responsibility of the community. It’s not only about the art, but also about the food – here at Alserkal are a lot of vegan restaurants. I am an artist and I am choosing to be cruelty free and make responsible choices.”

“It’s an exciting time for art and design in the region. Having Alserkal as a space and incubator of creative practices is significant.”

RIEM IBRAHIM, Egypt
Designer and Co-Founder,
Möbius Design Studio



1



2



3

1. HALA AL-ANI, Iraq, Graphic Designer and Co-Founder of Möbius Design Studios “It’s a very exciting time for art and design in this region. Both industries are celebrated immensely all around the UAE. It is a work in progress and everybody is welcome to contribute.” 2. SALEM AL-QASSIMI, Sharjah, Founder/Principal of Fikra Design Studio and Assistant Professor of Design at the American University of Sharjah “March is the result of the coming together of different creative disciplines and it’s the month where we reflect and catch up on what everybody has been up to for the past year.” 3. ELISA ARIENTI, Italy, Co-Founder/Creative Director, La Come Di “Dubai is raw. Sometimes so raw that we get lost in finding ways to show our potential. But when we do, it’s powerful and fulfilling as artists. There is a lot to do and we always try to create better art together in a multicultural environment.”

at 10:34am

on Monday, February 6

in Amsterdam

IWAN BAAN

Architecture Photographer

*“Architects aren’t
the best planners.
They work for ten years
on a building then call you
up two days in advance
and say ‘oh it’s finished,
can you go?’”*

Iwan Baan is the world's foremost and most famous architecture photographer. It's a subjective title, but many architects feel they must have their building shot by him. That means a rigorous work schedule around the world, so it's a rare day to be able to catch up with him at home in the Netherlands.

Baan's photos are unusual in the realm of architecture photography, where shots are traditionally sterile and empty, presenting the image of the building or an interior as a large scale still-life.

Instead he is much more interested in context – the landscape, foreground and background, the streets surrounding the building and most importantly people either loitering, walking past or actively interacting with the building. And where many photographers would photoshop out a stray tree or signpost from a perfect composition, Baan keeps them in.

“Life is messy! For me it's about telling the story of a place, it's not about when the building is finally finished and everything is swept way and that one moment in time when everything is perfect.

I use Canon digital SLRs and carry a number of lenses with me; I work lightweight and handheld. Although it's true: The best camera is the camera you have with you. I start with a shortlist from the architects telling me which details and angles they want. I then have a first impression of a place: The people, the culture, the surroundings of each building. It's about being intuitive, just spending time, sometimes a couple of days with the building, looking at the light, the weather. There are so many variables that are also out of my control and these unplanned things are what I capture and make part of the story.”

Baan didn't study architecture, instead he was at art school studying photography and then trying to find a niche he was happy in.

“It was by accident that eleven years ago I met Rem Koolhaas and we clicked. I loved the context of how he was building, especially in Beijing with the CCTV tower and the Olympic projects. It was a perfect way of combining my love of documentary photography with taking architecture photos.

Architects aren't the best planners. They work for ten years on a building then call you up two days in advance and say: ‘Oh it's finished can you go?’ It's hard to plan too much in advance, although I'll usually know which continent I'll be on and then am able to combine specific commissions with my personal projects, which are less time sensitive: My fascination with informal places where people live and the way that cities grow. But there are always moments when you have to fly to the other side of the globe at short notice.”

His long term projects include a book about the architect John Portman, documenting his work with the city of Atlanta, and another book exploring the relationship between climate, landscape and architecture.

“It's more about the atmosphere, weather and light; a much more ephemeral thing to photograph. It's a two year project that will be published next year.”

He thinks about his forthcoming travel schedule. **“I don't seem to do much else but traveling. I'm only one or two days a month back in Amsterdam. I've just come back from a commission for Herzog & de Meuron to photograph their Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and also last week I was in France for a beautiful new library, and then tomorrow I'll be in Denmark for an exhibition of Wang Shu's work which is launching with a book as well.”**

So it's another week of a life on the road and in airports: **“You know, I don't actually photograph airports. I try to spend as little time in them as possible...”**



Opposite page:
New York
after Hurricane
Sandy,
USA, 2012

“I was in New York for another project for Herzog & de Meuron, which had been delayed because of Hurricane Sandy and I was in my hotel room when all the lights went out. You think it’ll only be for a few minutes, but it went on and on.

It was eerie, the city without electricity, everything grinding to a halt. It was such a strange and unique moment, and I thought ‘how can I represent this?’

I realized I needed to get into the air. An aerial photo would be amazing, but none of the helicopter pilots I

knew in the city could get to an airport, there was no gasoline, no electricity... But luckily I had once previously organized a pilot in Long Island, which wasn’t so affected, and he was the only one who was able to fly.

I drove out all the way there and then we flew back over Manhattan in a helicopter, the doors open while I shot the city. You can see the edge of the lights and where the city was dark. It became the cover photo for *New York* magazine and went around the world.”

*“You can see the edge of the lights
and where the city was dark.
It became the cover photo for
New York magazine,
and went around the world.”*

Next page:
Makako
Floating School,
Lagos, Nigeria, 2013

“I prefer to take my aerial photos with a helicopter but it’s not always possible, so this was taken with a large bespoke drone built for me to hold a full DSLR camera. I’m standing on the small island behind the school [with the blue roof]. This is a project from a good friend of mine, Kunlé Adeyemi, whom I met twelve years ago when I worked with Rem Koolhaas and he was working there too. He then started his own office and this was one of his first projects. He proposed this prototype school for the community and used local carpenters to build it.

He saw it as a way to do something for the city and for the community of Makako, which is situated on the water’s edge, a shallow seabed between two peninsulas. The property prices in Lagos have gone up incredibly so people started to move to the water’s edge and slowly they moved into the water. It’s shallow so you can build on stilts and it’s become this informal community of about 150,000 people. Nothing is regulated, so schools are informal and there are grocers and hairdressers all on the water.”







“This is a very special place for me; almost the most eastern tip of North America, Fogo was a small fisherman’s island, but they left in the 1970s after the fishing quotas were installed.

Then a locally-born business woman, Zita Cobb, moved back from the mainland to kickstart a new island community – one making local design objects like furniture. She’s made it into a very small scale, high-end tourism destination. It’s tiny but incredibly beautiful; you feel you’re far away from the rest of the world. She invited architect Todd

Saunders, a Newfoundland-born architect, to design a small hotel plus resident studios for visiting artists and helped fund the local economy to foster the growing community there. I’ve been there five or six times to document the growing economy and community. This photo is the Tower Studio and I’m standing on the top floor looking down on the artist Kate Newby. She was inspired by the landscape – you can see how the texture and colors of the landscape outside the window match the art she’s working with on the floor.”

Opposite page:
Tower Studio,
Fogo Island,
Newfoundland,
Canada, 2013



“If the people weren’t there, it would be an abstract picture.”

“I’ve been a number of times to Baku as I’m working on a book with Harvard University on its urban development. It’s a very interesting city; there have been three big oil booms over the course of the last century and at the moment there’s another so you get high profile projects such as Zaha Hadid’s theater and museum.

There’s a strange juxtaposition with this photo. You can see the story of the city’s incredible transformation at the moment. You see the way that the old city is being

reclad in limestone to transform it from the Soviet era architecture. And then in the background you see this hovering amorphous structure – it shows how the city is changing. And I like the way the woman’s white headscarf almost has the same shape as the building. On the other photo, if the people weren’t there, it would be such an abstract picture. The construction workers sitting down gives it scale and without them you couldn’t tell where the building ends and where the pavement and the city starts.”

Above:
Heydar Aliyev Center,
Baku, Azerbaijan,
2011-2013





Torre de David,
Caracas, Venezuela,
2011

“There’s a huge percentage of the city who live in slums so any vacant plot in Caracas is taken. This building, which was going to be the tallest tower in the city, was started in the early 80s as the headquarters of a bank but then the economy crashed and it was left unfinished, an empty concrete shell. But people decided to move in there: There are 45 stories without elevators or running water and yet 3,000 people

live in this vertical community – from the shops to the hairdressers – and you see here a gym on the 28th floor. I’ve been there around five times documenting how people created homes in this unimaginable place, building an incredible community by themselves. It’s eye-opening to see how people can build something out of nothing under very tough conditions.”



at 11:00am

on Saturday, April 8

in Los Angeles

ROY CHOI

Chef



*“LA is an ingredient,
it’s a part of the DNA of
everything that I do.”*



2



3



1

Roy Choi is in many ways the quintessential Cali kid: The black Stussy gear, inked-up arms, baseball cap, and particular skater swagger broadcast worldwide as Angeleno. But he's also quintessentially SoCal in his immigrant background, the first-gen Asian son of immigrants in Koreatown, growing up, as he says, around Chicanos, El Salvadorians, Guatemalans, folks from Puebla, Michoacan, Jalisco... a nuance showing the profound respect he has for Latin people and their distinct cultures.

The project that put him on the global map was a humble food truck, Kogi, which exploded with such combustive popularity that the mere sighting of it would cause Twitter meltdowns and traffic jams wherever it parked.

Its Asian-Latino genesis is pure Los Angeles – Kogi could not have been born anywhere else in the world. And it's no hyperbole to say that it spearheaded the entire food truck revolution that spread from Los Angeles around the world.

“My friend called me and had this idea of putting Korean BBQ in a taco. I was out of a job at the time so had plenty of time to try to think about this. And so from that point on Kogi became the story of my life – I was able to finally express and combine all my training up until that point as a chef. It's everything that I am; it's everything that I express.

Chef Choi's three dishes from LA:

1. Kogi short rib tacos – “The recipe just happened in the first shot, there was no experimentation. I haven't changed the recipe since and it still tastes brand new. Everything about what I do and what I represent is Los Angeles: Just speaking the language of LA through food, whether it's the ingredients, the style, the flavor, whether it's the influences of what it's trying to represent. A lot of it is the stories in the food, telling the stories of growing up as an immigrant kid or what it's like to eat in our house, or little small things that we enjoyed that maybe not everyone knows about. Taking things that maybe are stinky or that people aren't familiar with and putting them into a new context where everyone understands how delicious they are.”

2. Beer can chicken – “This comes from A-Frame, my first sit-down restaurant as an owner. We were trying to create the perfect fried chicken based around all the chickens and food that I really enjoyed. So the first idea was to form it around the Korean fried chicken that you find at beer halls. It's a non-breaded chicken marinated in beer and milk, and then fried so that the skin is really crispy, like stained glass. And then at the time I was eating a lot of pollo a la brasa, which is a slow rotisserie Peruvian-style chicken and served with a spicy salsa verde. And then the third piece was in high school, going a lot to Rowland Heights and Monterey Park and eating Peking duck. So it was about those three memories and trying to create my own signature

chicken dish, and it came out to be the Beer can chicken.

The Peruvian represents itself in the rotisserie and the salsas, the Korean represents itself in the crispiness of the chicken and marinating it in beer and the herbs, and then the Peking duck style comes from the skin. The way that we prep the chicken is a two-day process where we brine, dry, chill, and fry it. But it's rotisserie'd at a very low flame, almost like a sous-vide, for at least six hours so that the meat doesn't dry out.”

3. Chubby pork belly bowl – “Chego was the first fast casual restaurant that happened right after the second year of Kogi. It was a poem to all the refrigerators that Asian-American kids grow up with. Wherever you were from Asia, if you opened your refrigerator, to most people that aren't from Asia, that refrigerator would seem very foreign. What we tried to do was open it up and share it with the world, and then that came in the form of these bowls and the first was this one.

It has influences from Indonesia and Malaysia, but also from Japan with the Yakitori and from Korea. It has influences from Los Angeles through the salsas, and through Thailand and China through the peanuts and the herbs and the way that we cooked the pork, like Chinese barbecued pork, and then in all of that mixed together, the way that we used the rice and the egg like nasi goreng. It was this melting pot bowl that represented all these Asian-American kids and refrigerators growing up. It was a huge hit.”

at 1:21pm

on Thursday, April 6

in Point Reyes,
California

LEONARD KOREN

Founder,
WET magazine



*“Why not start
a magazine about
gourmet bathing?”*



Book texts from Making WET: The Magazine of Gourmet Bathing, copyright 2012,
by Leonard Koren. Used with permission of Imperfect Publishing.

One afternoon in the mid-1970s, Leonard Koren was having a bath when he had a splash of inspiration: To make a magazine.

That idea became *WET*, a magazine about ‘gourmet bathing’ that ran from 1976 and 1981.

Koren as its founder, editor and publisher created a publication that was both irreverent and thoughtful, a magazine about bathing, about water, but also immersed totally in the artistic culture of the late 1970s.

Based mostly out of Venice, Los Angeles, it did what all good magazines do – held a mirror up to society. In *WET*’s case, this mirror was steamed up with a smiley face drawn into it.

***WET*’s Four Basic Tenets:**

1. Water, steam, air, and mud – and the energy to heat them – are precious resources to be cherished and conserved.
2. Cleanliness is next to impossible (but keep trying anyway).
3. Nakedness is almost always an excellent idea.
4. In addition to all its other charms, bathing is an accommodating metaphor.

“People often assume that I’ve always been interested in bathing. But this isn’t so. My fascination really only began while in architecture school. Like most of my classmates, I was initially drawn to the heroic architectures du jour, Modern – the taut muscular variety – and then Proto-Postmodernism. When those love affairs soured, I became curious about less self-conscious, more human approaches to place-making. This led me to small, intimate environments: The kind of places that induce you to ‘let go’ and ‘be yourself’.

The Japanese tea room – despite its very appealing form and philosophy – was too culturally specific for the vague purposes I had in mind. I sought a species of enclosed space that offered similar possibilities for transcendental experience but was more universally available.

That’s when I discovered the bathroom. Bathrooms are everywhere. Just about

everyone has one. And every bathroom, no matter how crude or sophisticated, comes equipped with all the elements of a primal poetry: Water and/or steam; hot, cold, and in between; nakedness; quietude and illumination.

By the time I had completed all the coursework for my master’s degree, architecture was the last thing on my mind. I was off in a different direction. I was making bath art.

This involved getting people to take off all their clothes and then bathe, according to my detailed instructions – in either water, mud, hot air or steam – while I took photos. Afterwards I assembled the images into more complex visual artifacts, usually lithographic and silkscreen prints. I sold these in galleries and through word of mouth.

The models for my various projects were mainly artists and all of them had modeled for free. I wanted to reciprocate for their kindness and generosity, but I had little money. A ‘thank you’ party felt like a good solution. A friend suggested I check out the Pico-Burnside Baths, a down-at-the-heels Russian Jewish bathhouse midway between downtown Los Angeles and the beach. Once inside I was immediately charmed by the authentic retro ambience, down to the mismatched wall finishes and the lingering smells of Eastern European delicatessen foods.

The manager quickly let me know that mixed-sex bathing was absolutely forbidden. But what the hell. He offered me the entire facility – a sauna, two steam rooms, a swimming pool, a whirlpool, snack and changing areas, a weight training space – for \$450, provided I cleared everyone out by midnight.

I calculated I would need an additional \$200 for refreshments; I had friends who could cater at cost. And I knew an electric jazz violinist who might play if I offered him \$100 or so. It was well over my budget, but since the place could accommodate at least 150 people, and I was obliged to comp only about 70, I figured I could invite other art-related types, charge them for an unusual experience and cover my costs.

The party came at the end of an exceptionally sultry late-summer day. Angelinos, tan and tight after the discipline of three months in a bathing suit, were unusually primed for something new and edgy. And that's what they got. The next morning the buzz around the art and design communities was 'You should have been there!'

Then the *Los Angeles Times* ran a long gushy feature on the event. Included was a photo of me shaking hands with fashion designer Rudi Gernreich, the creator of the monokini, a.k.a. the topless bathing suit. Gernreich was elegantly attired in shoes, slacks, and a sweater. I was barefoot, a flimsy yukata clinging to my torso. This ramped up the hyperbole and myth-making to an extraordinary level.

By the end of the week even I was deluded into thinking that a new (arty) context for pleasurable social interactions had

inadvertently emerged. Conventional norms of party behavior appeared to have been upended, or at least temporarily suspended. Things were definitely going my way.

How, I wondered, could I exploit this unexpected turn of events?

My brain was on overdrive. In order to slow things down I would draw a hot, steamy bath around two or three o'clock every afternoon. Once immersed I lay perfectly still. My muscles unclenched and my eyes softly focused on a patch of mysteriously glowing water six inches in front of my nose. During one of these quiet moments an almost-audible voice whispered in my ear, 'Why not start a magazine about gourmet bathing?'"

From the first issue in May 1976, there followed an exceptional outpouring of creativity and collaborations for Koren and his team.

Simpsons' creator Matt Groening drew comic strips; there were stories about drinking water ('bathing from the inside'), waterbeds, toothpaste reviews, discourses on fashion, politics, religion, and architecture; and interviews with Timothy Leary, Brian Eno and Mick Jagger.

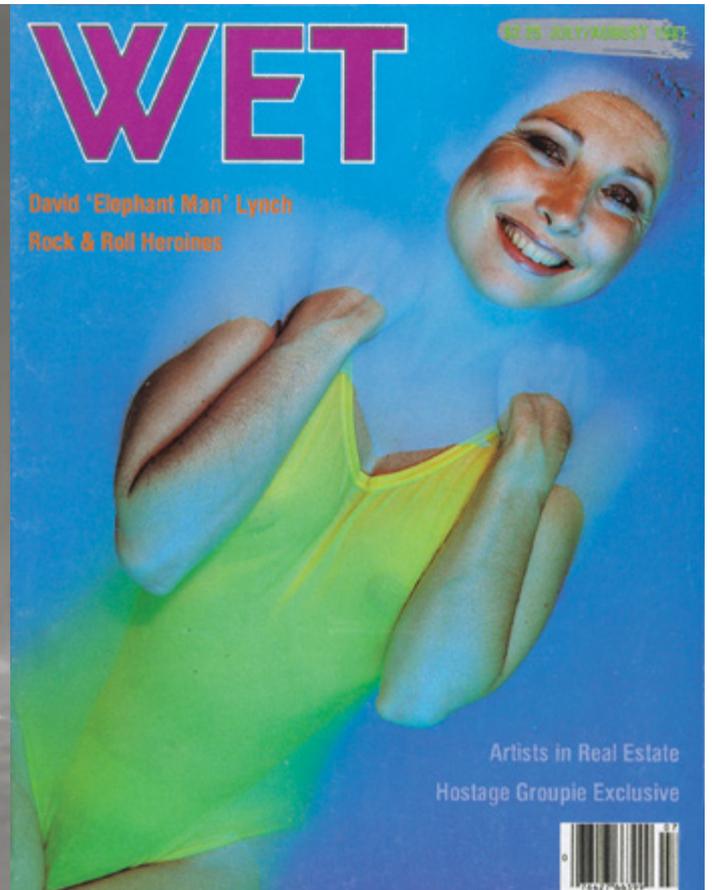
But after five years and 34 issues, the business pressures of marketing and funding an increasingly successful and bigger magazine whilst keeping that initial buzz of innocent creativity took its toll and Koren decided rather than sell up and see his vision diluted by a larger mass publisher, he'd close the magazine.

The last issue, Nov/Dec 1981, showed that the title had firmly moved towards a more pop culture angle with Priscilla Presley on the cover, interviews with John Lydon and Van Halen and a discourse on artist Ed Ruscha.

While *WET* still has an archived online presence and Koren has produced a hardback chronicle of the magazine, he hasn't moved too far with his own curiosities. He still has in his mind that initial idea of the culture of small intimate spaces, and has moved into writing books on Japanese culture – including *How to take a Japanese bath...*

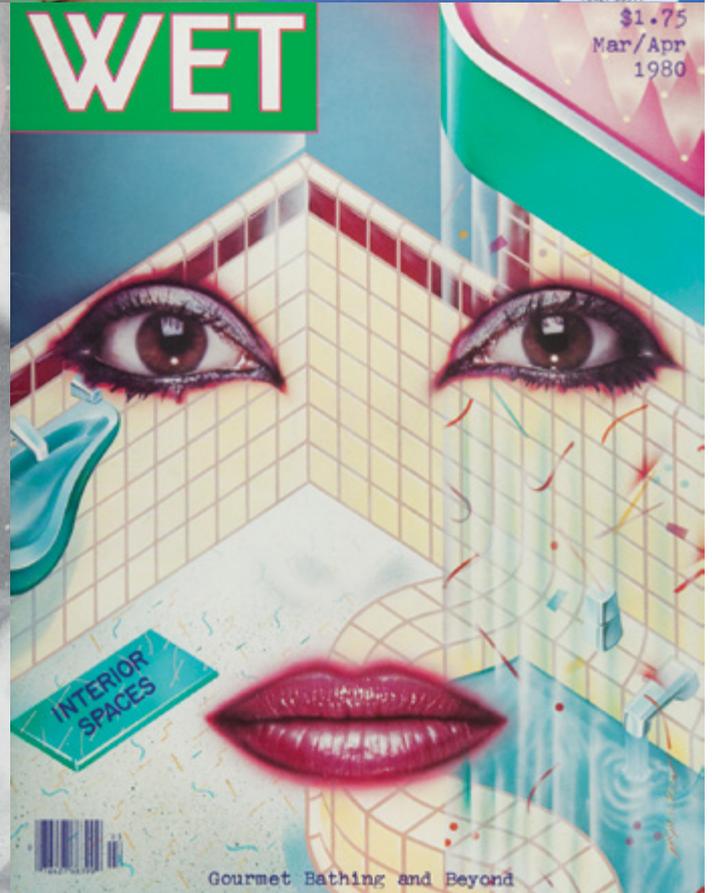
WET publisher Leonard Koren selling copies of the magazine for fun on the Venice Boardwalk circa 1978
Photograph by Lyle Mayer





David 'Elephant Man' Lynch
Rock & Roll Heroines

Artists in Real Estate
Hostage Groupie Exclusive



CREATIVE CITY PORTFOLIO

WELCOME
TO
SHANGHAI





“It may be wise to regard Shanghai as the world’s new financial and commercial capital, the hub of a country that isn’t now just an outsourced production base, but which has become central to our accelerating, modernizing world. The speed of life in the city is unlike anywhere else – it’s like Sim City on ‘cheetah’ setting – roads get built, buildings come down, buildings go up and society and technology move at a fantastic rate.

Mobile apps such as Mobike (essentially Uber for bicycles) and WeChat, an incredibly diverse IM platform for exchanging ideas, friends and money, are being used to drive this society forward. By comparison, it makes Whatsapp seem like social technology from the 1970s. In fact, once you’ve spent some time in Shanghai, the entire rest of the world seems somewhat old-fashioned and stationary.

The artists, entrepreneurs and designers we met and talked to are all part of the city’s creative community. Incredibly tightknit and actively mobile, they are living in a 21st Century sleepless commercial dynasty where the words ‘opportunity’ and ‘potential’ are part of everyone’s manifesto.

They all share stories about ‘doing’, that in Shanghai you can have an idea and realize it faster than anywhere else. That while in many ways it is still an immature market, it’s also a very fast growing and fast learning city and that it’s still not too late to join the party.”

at 6:15pm

on Thursday, April 13

in Shanghai

ANSON CHEN

Magician and
Owner of Blackstone



“Magic is an art form.”

Anson Chen is sitting in the magician’s chair center stage of his theater and relating his journey in magic: From high school in Hong Kong to the opening of Blackstone, a cocktail bar and magic venue. If it’s hard to see him as a magician, that’s not a criticism, for he plies his trade without the clichés of over theatricality, bizarre arm movements and arched eyebrows. He’s smart, engaging and down to earth.

“I remember being in a mall looking for a video game and I went past a small corner magic shop. I walked in and saw the displays of linking rings and cups and bowls, and I stayed there talking with the owner, watching him do card tricks for three hours until he wanted to close up and said to me, ‘do you wanna buy something or not?’

So I bought an ‘Introduction to Magic’ DVD and gave him the money I was gonna buy *FIFA* with. After that, I’d go to magic shops after school every day. And that eventually led me to Las Vegas where I studied under Armando Lucero, a very established magician. His philosophy of magic and teachings changed my life and he always talked about a venue for close-up magic.

I think that every art form needs framing and magic is an art form. The truth is today some of the world’s best magicians are performing at corporate events and

high-end restaurants and there’s no good framing for these wonderful magicians. I just wanted to build a theater for close-up magic with its own cocktail bar.

We have our evening 45 minute show, Blackstone Live, with a cocktail hour before where you see close-up magic at the bar before the curtain opens. Then after the performance, the bar opens to the public again, the theater becomes a lounge and the bar becomes the stage, with short close-up magic sets every half an hour. It’s where magicians can hone new material and improvise, because that practice is vital for performers. All our magicians here have at least ten years’ experience and even at that level it takes two to three months of practice to put new material into a regular show.

These days you have the Internet, sure, but the only way magic can be experienced properly is live. That’s the idea behind Blackstone.”

at 3:46pm
on Sunday, April 16
in Shanghai

CAVIA

DJ

Cavia, originally from Anhui Province, is one of the most popular DJs in Shanghai. Having arrived twelve years ago, he's seen the nightlife culture change dramatically over the years.

“The nightlife scene never stays still. Right now, it's harder for smaller clubs because you have rent increases and tighter licensing issues. Also everything is getting more fragmented – you need to be patient when starting a club or a curated night because there's more competition these days. But even though there are increasingly larger and more corporate clubs opening, there's still an underground culture here. You have to search for it and find the right information: WeChat [Chinese IM multi-app] is great for that – it's direct

communication, you can sell tickets and send out invites.

I've been doing my own curated night, Cavia & Co, at Le Baron for almost two years. Although it's been amazing to play and share music with good friends there, I don't like it when it gets too safe. Sometimes it's too easy to play to people who always support me. You need to be stretched. You need to find new audiences as well.

DJing is always fun but right now I'm concentrating more on producing original music. I suppose it's quite abstract, maybe like DJ Shadow in the 1990s. I'm also working on collaborations with visual artists and new media artists. In that sense, the community is strong here, even though nightlife culture is still small for the size of the city. It's not like in London or New York – we didn't have the subcultures or the tribes, for example the New Romantics or Blitz Kids. But more and more people are getting into club culture and that can only mean that they'll create something new out of it, something will happen. In that respect, I'm positive about the future. Although the music scene isn't as great as in Beijing – people create more there – if you have something special and original, you can find an audience here.”

*“You need to be stretched.
You need to find new audiences.”*



at 6:02pm

on Saturday, April 8

in Shanghai

CAMDEN HAUGE &

OLIVIA MOK

Social Supply



*“Shanghai is
a city of ‘let’s do
something new’.”*

Social Supply duo, Olivia and Camden, have been a major fixture on Shanghai’s food scene for the last three years, deftly mixing event production, catering, food festivals and startlingly inventive pop-ups, enlivening the city’s culinary and creative life.

We sat down with them at La Maison, the French Concession villa-restaurant that Olivia is a co-partner of, and let them talk about their journey to Shanghai, their creative life in the city and why they put a decapitated woman’s head in a bathtub.

Olivia: “I was studying in LA and my brother was studying here, and I hadn’t been to Shanghai for ten years but I just felt it was the next blossoming place. I felt that I really should be here. So well..., I just moved here.”

Camden: “Yes, it is like that. I was in London and following my art history degree, I fell into advertising working at Saatchi & Saatchi and while I loved London, I wanted to explore other options, so they said I could work in Shanghai and I took that opportunity for a three month contract. I thought when else would I get that

opportunity to come to a city like Shanghai? And three months turned into five years...

I met all these inspiring people here starting up communities and businesses, and I started Shanghai Supperclub, small roving dinner parties that featured a different chef in a different location each time because I wanted to meet new groups of people and also dip my toe into the F&B community here.

I’d always wanted to work in this industry but couldn’t just quit a corporate job to do that straightaway.



Above:
Camden and Olivia
at La Maison

Left:
Brunch at Egg

After a year, I felt I wanted to open a restaurant – which took another year to happen and I realized I needed someone to help me on Supperclub while I focused on Egg, my restaurant. Why Egg? Well an egg is simple and essential. If you put an egg on anything it tastes better – that’s the key to home leftovers! – and we have a breakfasty brunch vibe. So then a mutual friend introduced us and Olivia came on board with Supperclub and ran the hell out of it, doing more corporate events and private parties.”

Olivia: “We weren’t cooking, we were hosting but we were learning along the way and then we realized as well as doing the catering for events, we could do the whole event production ourselves, and that’s how our agency Social Supply started.”

Camden: “And it happened really quickly and very organically within a year. And now for our events, we do all the production ourselves, everything from building LED screens to curating guest lists to pouring the champagne and doing the cleaning up after. We’ve now got a team and we’re moving at a much faster pace, but Shanghai is moving at a very fast pace too.

When you think about the food scene now, it’s a very exciting time. If you want to put it in context, there have been three waves.

Twelve years ago Shanghai had openings like the first Irish pub, the first Italian restaurant and so on. It was an influx of new ideas into Shanghai from abroad, then about eight years ago you had entrepreneur chefs arriving, serious cooks coming into the market and really raising the quality and upping the game, and then in the last three years we have the growth of the very specific niches, more fusion, more stylized menus, like an Ethiopian food pop-up. The city has now achieved an amazing level of diversity and quality.”

Olivia: “And no other city in China can compete with this, people are more creative here even than in Hong Kong. Shanghai is a city of ‘let’s do something new’ and people are adventurous here and take risks.”

Camden: “Although it is getting harder over the last year with the government and governance changes, licensing issues, even rent is on a level with New York and London. I’m worried it’ll have a negative effect on the scene, that it’ll be harder to take those risks.”

Olivia: “But on the positive side, you still have that creative energy. That hasn’t changed. People here are ferocious about ‘chasing the new’ and the culture remains strong, but it is getting harder to open a new business. Although we’ve just launched a new event, Cocktail Cinema. In a Supperclub style, we’re trying to create an immersive screening experience for a small number of people in a different location each month, blending the movie with cocktail culture.”

Camden: “We just did our first one with *American Psycho*, recreating Patrick Bateman’s apartment with plastic sheeting, a real chain saw, everyone wore the plastic trench coats, and we had a woman’s head in the bathroom and then we served drinks at specific times during the movie. For instance in one part of the film there’s a scene where he gives a girl a very fine Chardonnay with a roofie, so at the same time we served a glass of white wine, with crystallized alcohol sprinkled over the top.”

Olivia: “It was an escape for the night, it offers something new for Shanghai’s nightlife – but still with alcohol because people like to drink. And now we’re gonna start Live Room, which is a regular event for live music each month, in a different location each time. It’ll be a small crowd of around 40 and just add to the city’s music scene. I know people will be very supportive. I feel that everyone here wants to work with each other, they’re very open, they ask for your opinions. It’s a very supportive culture, people aren’t protective of their ideas, people aren’t afraid to share ideas. What’s nice here is that ideas bounce between the foreign community and the local community.”

Camden: “That’s true. I would have been intimidated to do anything I’ve done here in another city, but people here are very encouraging.”

at 4:04pm

on Sunday, April 9

in Shanghai

LEO XU

Founder and Owner,
Leo Xu Projects

Shanghai local Leo Xu set up his internationally acclaimed gallery five years ago, quickly becoming a fulcrum of the city's arts scene. Thoughtful and collaborative, but critical when he needs to be, he is in a position to notice the fast cultural changes all around him and adapt to them.

“This is a very unique city because contemporary Shanghai resembles the Shanghai of the 1920s and 1930s. It has always been a city concerned with fusion and reinvention and due to its colonial past has always been more international than other Chinese cities. This of course is also reflected in the arts here.

There is a strong dialogue between the local communities and the waiguoren [foreign] community – but they each produce something very different.

The local community represents contemporary Chinese art and culture and the expat community acts as an ambassador of global culture here, seeding and facilitating different ideas and shipping in new tools and events. That stimulates the growth of the local community, which in turn broadens the horizons of the expat community.

To put today's scene in context, you can really see the way the community has been evolving over the last 15 years. At the beginning of the century, the city only had around eight galleries and they mainly specialized in modern local figurative paintings. When MOCA opened in 2005, it heralded the generation of art museums and institutions that channeled a great energy into the city. That attracted more artists and there was a feeling of everyone working hard to help produce a generation of modern artists in photography, video and installation art. We didn't know in which direction we were going – it was the unknown.

But what has happened since, is that the art scene has become dominated by the wealthy individuals, collectors and corporate bodies. Art is less and less in the hands of independent curators, the public and artists.

The marketing of Chinese art is booming but I see too much bust, too many bubbles – people are over estimating the market and potential of Shanghai. The problem is that the local art community isn't taking risks because Shanghai is a city that has become too comfortable and cozy to be creative, it's a city for administration, for creative businesses like advertising, rather than a city to create – that's still Beijing.

The city is efficiently organized compared to other mainland Chinese cities, it's big, fast, speaks an international language, so people have a happy life – but it's exactly this

that kills the Chinese creative process, which traditionally needs a lot of time and space.

Young artists here are being discovered by the international Marco Polos of the art world and this phenomenon of publicity, hype and money means they can live pretty well off as an artist without doing too much, changing too much, pushing too much.

There is less self-discipline; it's not like in Europe or America, where artists are really managing their studios and careers and are as disciplined as architects and designers.

If you think of the cliché of the tortured artist, in Shanghai there's no torture, because people have such a comfortable life. There's also less competition here as an artist than in the US or Europe. Everyone has more than 15 minutes of fame, in fact you can get your 15 minutes almost daily.

We see it as a privilege to run a gallery. As well as having a core responsibility nurturing artists' careers, we take pleasure in trying to create cross-disciplinary dialogues. So we see ourselves standing as a bridge between different sectors – visual art and design, graphic, architecture, music, and cinema. I'm happy to see artists channel activities elsewhere – on apps or in a public space – or pairing our artists with urban planners, architects and product designers.

We have a small team of three here and believe that a gallery can't just be a white box. A gallery must evolve into a laboratory. It can no longer be just a business selling art and visiting art fairs. That's a last century definition of what a gallery does.

With new social media and technology, the way we communicate is dramatically changing and galleries must change too.”



“The local art community aren’t taking risks because Shanghai is a city that has become too comfortable and cosy.”

at 3:17pm

on Thursday, April 20

in Shanghai

BRIAR HICKLING &

ALEX MOK

Linehouse Architects



“You can find your niche here easier than in other cities.”

Linehouse, set up by New Zealander Briar Hickling and Chinese-Swedish Alex Mok has only been going for four years but already has made a big mark on Shanghai’s architecture scene, particularly with their food projects for independent new outlets including Bao Bao and Little Catch.

“We met each other working at Neri & Hu, [Shanghai’s renowned architecture and design studio]. We were both working there for around five years, but we didn’t really know or speak to each other for four of them! Then we happened to work on a project together and we clicked.

When we started Linehouse together we were hungry for work so did small projects, building fast and being playful, building up our working relationship. Everyone wants everything done fast here. And in the beginning we also worked very fast to accommodate clients. We would have plans designed and construction drawings completed in two weeks but now we’re able to be more reasonable with our time.

We like to work with people starting out, creating a new brand because we can create something new together. Quite often new clients just walk in like we’re a shop! We meet them to see if the project is a good fit, but we won’t work with people who don’t share the vision or the process with us. We work really closely together, start the original concept and the team will study and explore this idea.

I don’t think we have a specific in-house style, although we like working with simple materials in an unexpected way. We like the amount of customization you can do here and we can build our own fittings. You can do a lot of bespoke designs and prototype quickly. We’ve done some furniture and because the production base is here it facilitates all those resources.

We just finished the WeWork co-working space HQ, our biggest project to date, which is an amazing old building. It had a good concept and was executed so well. That was really fun.”



Above:
WeWork HQ in Shanghai



at 3:52pm

on Wednesday, April 12

in Shanghai

REDIC

Artist and Singer

Originally from Chicago, artist and singer Redic, has found his inspiration in Shanghai. His lane house apartment is ebulliently bursting at the seams with his art – paintings, poems, thrones, even his pillow is daubed in paint – bursting so much that it spills out into the communal stairwell and corridors and even onto the street outside.

*“Shanghai has
a way of taking you
on adventures.”*

“I thought I’d be here for three months – it’s very common to say – but I’ve been here now for seven years: Shanghai has a way of taking you on adventures.

The catalyst for what I’ve been doing with my art is the beauty and craziness of China. I’ve been chronicling my life and experiences as my ‘China Chapters’, using found materials.

A major theme of my work is transformation, finding rubies in the rubble and as a bit of a romantic and a nostalgist, explaining my shock and awe at the rapid growth and development of the country.

I’ve found that the ability to collaborate in other cities takes more effort. Here, there’s less ego and the willingness to work together has been amazing.

I’m also a singer in my band, Redic and The Storm Riders, and I have a phenomenal keyboardist from China, a guitarist from Portugal, a bass player from Brazil and a drummer from Mauritius. And that’s typical of a lot of my projects with music, fashion and art. I would have been able to do them in the States, but it would have taken far more effort and far more time to corral everyone together.

Right now, I’m working on an immersive art circus exhibition for next year: Performance art; music; I have an aroma curator; food and fashion; showcasing all my visual work, my China Chapters. Everything feeds into my international experiences with China as the background.

It’s not a melting pot; I prefer to call it a gathering spot. You can feel all the distinct cultures and personalities with the Chinese coming from all over the country and us, from all over the world, gathering together.”



at 5:46pm

on Thursday, April 20

in Shanghai

RODNEY EVANS

Owner, Central Studios



Rodney Evans opened Central Studios eight years ago initially as just a photo studio, but increasingly, he has built it into a creative hub and a meeting point for the community.

“When I created Central Studios, it was just to build a studio, but as a company I knew we could be so much more. We’ve earned our place in the city’s production community, offering space for editorial and commercial shoots, test shoots for new photographers and TV shows who

broadcast from here. We’ve built a family because we’re dependable and want to be part of what’s going on in the city. We support school visits providing equipment and teaching, we host film nights, we have our annual fair day, and we work with charities and host exhibitions. Our doors are always open, we’re always happy to see interesting people create thought-provoking and beautiful work.

In terms of the city, Shanghai ebbs and flows, sometimes there’s a surge of creativity with events and exhibitions and it’s a pulsing vibrant city, and then other times things feel a little bit more restricted.

You have big institutions like Long Museum and Yuz Museum that can offer world-class exhibitions, there’s Shanghai Photo and design expos, always a lot of things in the calendar – it’s definitely a top tier world class city, working within the framework of what China can offer. That’s part of living in China; there are rules that we have to abide by. It’s an authoritarian country but a very capitalist society as well, people are here to make money.

I am optimistic about the future with the way the country is being led. There’s a lot of uncertainty right now in the geopolitical climate, but there’s stability here. Shanghai is the kind of place, where if you’re new to China, you can really sense the possible. See what the country has done, how it has embraced technology – especially with WeChat – as an artist or creator you should experience this modern society, it’s an inspiring landscape.

“If you’re new to China you can really sense the possible.”



夢中的土地

at 1:56pm
on Thursday, April 2
in Shanghai

NELSON NG

Founder and Editor,
Lost magazine



“Anyone can be a
brand here.”

Nelson is biting into a wrap at his favorite coffee shop in Shanghai’s French Concession. He sheepishly admits that he lives next door, as if the editor of a travel magazine ought to trek miles for lunch.

“Well I work from home on *Lost*, although when I started in 2015, I was still an Art Director at Wieden + Kennedy. Actually this whole street, Wuyuan Lu, is a really strong community. It was one of the great accidents that happened – I moved here just because work was around the corner. Then I discovered there are a lot of architecture and fashion design studios in the lanes and making the magazine helped me connect with people.

I did issue one completely for fun; I had no magazine experience, so the first print run was just 500 copies. I didn’t even contact any bookstores before we printed. If I didn’t sell any, I was going to give them as Christmas presents, but it completely sold out. The people around me really understood its message about very personal experiences and essays. There are no maps inside, the destination doesn’t even matter, because the magazine is all about what the writer or photographer learned and experienced on a trip.

We produce an issue every eight months and in between have other collaborative print projects. When you have a magazine, you can give it to people and it starts a conversation. I found that when you start something, you meet people who are starting their own thing as well and you can help each other. For example, there’s a juice bar down the road and I now make a magazine for them about farmers. We go to a farm and stay there for several days, documenting how they work and live, giving a backstory to the fruits and vegetables.

But as much as I love print, digital apps are really important in China. It feels like everyone is doing something because of the mobile phone. Because of Alipay, Taobao and WeChat, it’s so easy to sell anything here. All that’s left for you to do is make something because you are given all the tools to create a brand and start an online shop. Anyone can be a brand here.

So I’m concentrating now on building the *Lost* brand. We relaunched the website this year with online content and collaborated with another Shanghai brand to make a city bicycle with our logo. And now we’re working on issue five. The magazine has been my personal travel story.”



at 3:15pm

on Sunday, April 23

in Shanghai

CODY ALLEN &

JOHN LIU

Restaurateurs and
Entrepreneurs,
Highline

These two American friends came together last year with another partner, Michael Sun, to open up Highline, a California-inspired restaurant space. Both are already integral members of the city's food and beverage scene: Cody opening up Le Baron nightclub and John with two award-winning restaurants, Coquille and Scarpetta.

John: "We see Highline as being firstly a space and secondly a restaurant. The concept was decided by the location, we loved the patio and we knew it could be more than a restaurant. We thought about the whole idea behind a successful hotel lobby in the States – it's always busy throughout the day. That idea of an all day social hub doesn't exist here at all. There are many successful nightlife spaces that look like garbage during the day, because they weren't designed to look good in those hours and what we had to find was that balance: Sexy at night for dinner and drinks as well as open and graceful during the day for brunch, lunch and tea.

Having grown up in California I loved mid-century design and Cody is an encyclopedia of this and so that was the start of the design concept. We

talked about elegance and restrained simplicity. We did tons of research on Neutra, Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright... We went on tours in California, and then we had a great local design firm, RED, who understood exactly what we wanted. And what's great about mid-century design is that it allows you to have a duality between night and day.

Then we had to think about what California means to the Chinese. Unfortunately probably just burgers, so we wanted to be able to sell another side and tap into the Hollywood glamour of the 1950s and '60s. So all that also informed our menu: Refined, modern versions of American and Californian-focused classics such as prime rib, clam chowder, tuna tartare and then with our drinks menu having improved classics like the Wallbanger and Sex on the Beach."

The pair, having previously set up successful businesses in Shanghai, are in a perfect position to discuss the creative entrepreneurial environment of the city: Aware of its potential but crucially also understanding the current limitations.

John: "There has been a lot of opportunity for everyone in any industry here for over ten years, simply because it was underdeveloped, which means everyone can be their own business owner. It was a blank canvas. But in any immature market, product quality standards are always second to quantity, expansion and presence. And here, there was a lot of mamahuhu [Chinese for so-so or careless] thought.

But now China is more developed, the market is shifting at a higher, owner-investor level if not quite yet at a general consumer level. In every industry there's now more competition and that means you need to up your game, creatively and operationally.

Cody and I really care about quality and details, the thought and execution behind things. He already had an awesome brand, setting up Le Baron; I was a customer of his..."

Cody: "...And the same for me with John's restaurants. We all came to the project wanting to do something really special: None of us could have accomplished Highline without each other. And that is something that comes about exactly when you do have a more mature market with more competition. In any healthy industry you will get more people starting to collaborate, consolidate resources and realizing that you can often do a lot more together. But that begins when you realize that the only real competition you have is often yourself. You have to raise your own game."

John: "The difficulty in China, compared to the States, is that if you're anyone creative here, there are still too few of us of truly high quality, which means you're not bouncing ideas off each other and sparking new creativity."

Cody: "Am I positive about the future? Well I'm looking forward to my nap later!

There is a cliché about saying that China and Shanghai provide so much opportunity. But what people still don't understand is the scale of these opportunities. I do have a concern in the long run though: There is so much more culture being created now than at any point in history, but I don't know if there's a really well-educated, well-engaged audience here for that, which means a lot of the work suffers and isn't that good – and that's across all forms of culture, from food to media to ballet. They are all suffering from an under-informed, under-developed critical sensibility from their audience. And that is depressing and sad considering how easy it is to educate yourself these days."



“We had to think about what California means to the Chinese.”



at 12:02pm

on Thursday, April 20

in Shanghai

TON

Illustrator and Creator,
Flabjacks



“I started drawing to help myself relax.”



Antonia Mak, who goes under the moniker Ton, is the Hong Kong-born artist behind Flabjacks, an ever-growing family of cute, chubby characters.

“Ever since I was young, I’ve been interested in forms like sweet potatoes and elephant seals. Also my grandma is on the chubby side and so I started to associate all this with happiness and positive energy.

As a character style, Flabjacks evolved four years ago. I was working in advertising here with Apple as a client, so it was very intensive work with a very specific mindset. But no matter how late I worked, when I got

home I started drawing to help myself relax. And that evolved into Flabjacks and now I’m a full time illustrator.

I have collaborative projects with clients such as Nike, and then my work is tailored to each brand. The key to the Flabjacks characters isn’t actually their chubbiness but it’s the expression on their face and I add this to unexpected things such as bananas, which are my latest preoccupation, and broccoli. I’m just preparing for my first solo show, which will be here at the end of May and based around bananas. I’m also thinking about Durians a lot as I’ve made my first art-collectable toy called Dug.

Being an illustrator here in Shanghai as a career is quite unknown, it’s not like you’re a fine artist, but people are open to it. I love Shanghai because of that openness and also that there is a community of people who are also starting up their own businesses here. We’re all going through the same highs and problems, so it’s great to have that support network.”



at 3:27pm
on Thursday, April 20
in Shanghai

HADAS ZUCKER

Artist and
Creative Director

Having co-founded a fashion brand with her sister called Zucker Studio in her native Tel Aviv, and following a stint at Michael Kors in New York, Hadas moved to Shanghai in 2012, having first experienced the city eleven years ago and falling for its infectious raw energy.

“I wear many hats, I’m both an artist and a creative director and I teach and also consult to brands. I come

from the fashion industry and initially visited Shanghai to help a French brand establish themselves in China.

So I kept coming here for fashion production and kept sensing the cool, happening energy in this city. It reminded me of New York, and at one point I just decided that I wanted to be part of it and not just visit twice a year. It felt like an opportunity, the place hadn’t established itself yet so you could do things here. I thought it could be an interesting shift, so five years ago I moved here. And I was right – the city is very radical, dynamic and energetic – it has an aggressive, creative nature that I love.

After having worked full-time with various clients, I now freelance with fashion brands and also with BMW. My work is about story telling and creating something individual and interesting.

I personally appreciate the less commercial expression of youth culture – and there’s a lot of that in the community. All my friends are creatives and project-based freelancers, which I find very stimulating. There’s a lot of positivity here, you hear more ‘yes’ than ‘no’. And in that way, the city’s energy is unique – it’s not yet polished like New York and there’s a real beauty in that.”

“There’s a lot of positivity here. You hear more ‘yes’ than ‘no’.”

Photography: CARLOS DAVID JUNPA VALLADARES



“I’m interested that light has thingness itself, so it’s not something that reveals something about other things you’re looking at, but it becomes a revelation in itself.”

James Turrell

“I first saw James Turrell’s work earlier this year at his solo show at the Long Museum in Shanghai. It was amazing to experience how he uses light to create a sense of depth and space. Other people have used his art as inspiration before in fashion shoots, but done it in a much more literal way, recreating his pieces inside a studio. That didn’t seem appropriate... I wanted to use his ideas of pure light here in a more artistic way – specifically the way his light installations diffuse colors and human movements when you’re inside them. Everything becomes a blur, a sensory overload.”

Justin Cooper
Photographer, Shanghai



Earring **ATELIER SWAROVSKI**
Top **CARVEN** from 10 Corso Como
Skirt **MSGM** from 10 Corso Como

Tank Top **OHNE TITEL**
Bodysuit **ASLI POLAT**

*“Light is not so much
something that reveals as
it is itself the revelation.”*

James Turrell





Bracelet (style as choker) **ATELIER SWAROVSKI**
Knitted Wrap **KOH-CO**
Pants **AVIÙ** from **10 Corso Como**
Suede Sandal **LOEFFLER RANDALL**



This Page:
Earring **ATELIER SWAROVSKI**
Silk Top **RICK OWENS**
Bra Top **T BY ALEXANDER WANG**
Corset, Skirt **DEVON**

Opposite Page:
Earring **ATELIER SWAROVSKI**
Dress **THIRD FORM**
Mesh Cape **ASLI POLAT**
Suede Sandal **LOEFFLER RANDALL**

*“Seeing is a very sensuous act –
there’s a sweet deliciousness to
feeling yourself see something.”*

James Turrell



Photography: Justin Cooper at 5e Fashion Stylist: Jill Zhang Model: Ma at Longteng
Hair Stylist: Parco Cheung Make Up Artist: Miki Photographer Assistant: JC Stylist Assistant: Bobo Zhao
Producer: Matthieu Belin at 5e Production Coordinator: Lin Jiang at 5e
Thanks to Central Studios and 10 Corso Como Shanghai

at 10:02am

on Thursday, April 13

in New York

SHAUN FYNN

Designer and Photographer



“In Le Corbusier’s work you see a poetry that only exists in the vocabulary of a great master.”

Photography: SHAUN FYNN



Left:
The Palace of Assembly

Above:
The Open Hand Monument
(designed in the 1950s,
but not constructed until
1982)

Originally from a product design background, Shaun Fynn moved into research and documentary making. His latest book is a document of the remarkable Indian city of Chandigarh, which was designed by the Swiss architect Le Corbusier.

“I’ve been working and lecturing in India since 2000. My wife’s family is based in Chandigarh and we still travel there lots. But what really triggered this book was that I couldn’t find a photographic documentary that told the city’s story, the beauty of architecture and the patina of time, what’s happened to the city in the last 50 years.”

Shaun’s book, *Chandigarh Revealed, Le Corbusier’s City Today*, depicts the legacy of this unique collaboration between Le Corbusier and India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, commonly known as the architect of modern India, who oversaw the huge economic and social changes of the new republic.

Nehru had earmarked an area of villages and farmland to become this urban experiment, a favorite project to herald a new style of living, working and thinking, and also creating a capital for the recently formed state of Punjab after partition, which would be ‘free from encumbrances of the past’.

“There was definitely a meeting of minds – both of them were preoccupied with building great statements and visions. And although Le Corbusier was only there for one to two months a year, there was great efficiency between him and his team in India.

The city features many typical ideas of modernism – industrial construction, repetition and bold statements – but in Le Corbusier’s work you also see a poetry that only exists in the vocabulary of a great master. Especially the Palace of Assembly, which is an astonishing piece of work.

You couldn’t do this book in one visit; it requires you to be immersed to get the level of access and insight. I lived in and photographed the city for over three years. You then get to realize the incredible detail in which his team went to plan the city, from housing, public and educational institutions, to parks and government buildings. The more

you research, the more you realize how complex and complete the plan was. It's easy to dismiss modernism and its visual manifestations, but the depth of their planning is hard to criticize."

Le Corbusier's social politics dictated his work and he felt passionately about the city's potential for human development, writing: 'The city of Chandigarh is planned to human scale. It puts us in touch with the infinite cosmos and nature. It provides us with the places and buildings for all human activities by which the citizens can live a full and harmonious life. Here the radiance of nature and heart are within our reach'.

Chandigarh is divided into numbered districts for housing, recreation, industry and commerce and the city's fulcrum is the Capitol Complex, Sector 1 – large governmental buildings including the Palace of the National Assembly and the High Court of Justice plus a huge sculpture of his favorite symbol, the open hand of which he wrote: 'The hand is open to give and to receive; peace and prosperity, and the unity of mankind'.

The open hand features everywhere as the city's emblem, from the 26-meter high sculpture to the symbol of the local government, and while symbolizing his social message of the openness of ideas, it cleverly can also be interpreted as a dove of peace.

"What's unusual about Chandigarh is that the Capital Complex wasn't put at the center of the city, instead it is to the north because Le Corbusier wanted it within view of the Himalayan foothills. And today, these buildings are still functioning as they were originally intended – unlike other UNESCO listed sites."

The city's Le Corbusier Centre, which was fully restored last year, tells the story of how he worked in the city between 1951 and 1956 and the collaboration he had with Nehru to create a very 'Swiss' city in India. It was his largest project, the dream of every architect – to create an entire city.

The center is located in Sector 19 in his office complex where he worked with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret, local consultants and

two notable British architects in urban design and tropical climate architecture, Maxwell Fry and his wife Jane Drew.

They worked on new boulevards, open spaces, public buildings, swimming pools and housing, experimental for India at the time, with terraces and larger rooms. (The eminently quotable Le Corbusier once said: 'A house is a machine for living in'.) While the center provides a fascinating and intimate look at Le Corbusier's work, the real museum remains the city itself.

"People consider it orderly and easy to navigate; it doesn't suffer the chaos of Mumbai and Kolkata, cities that have developed without a plan and are out of control."

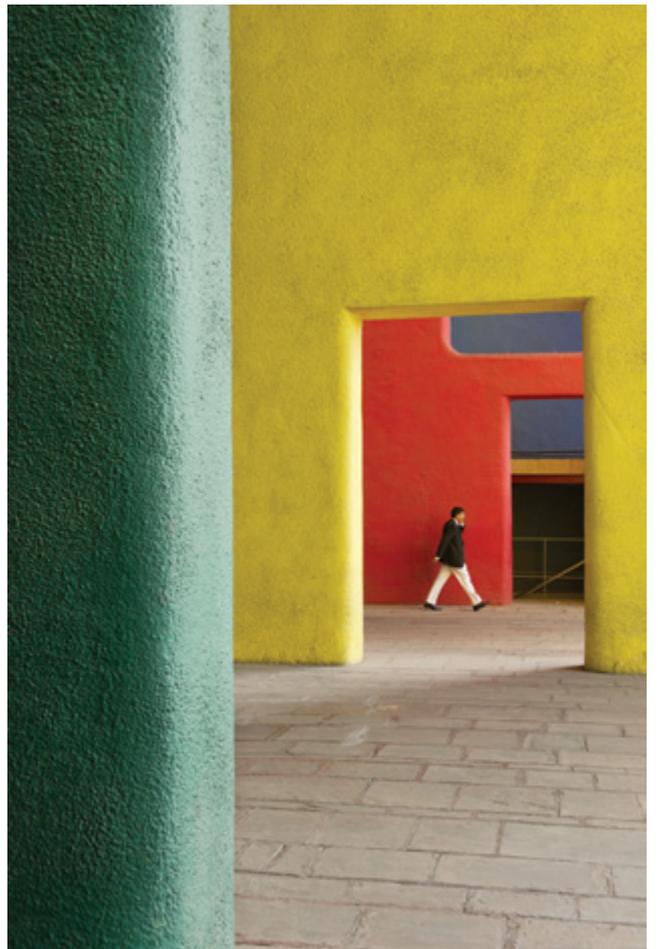
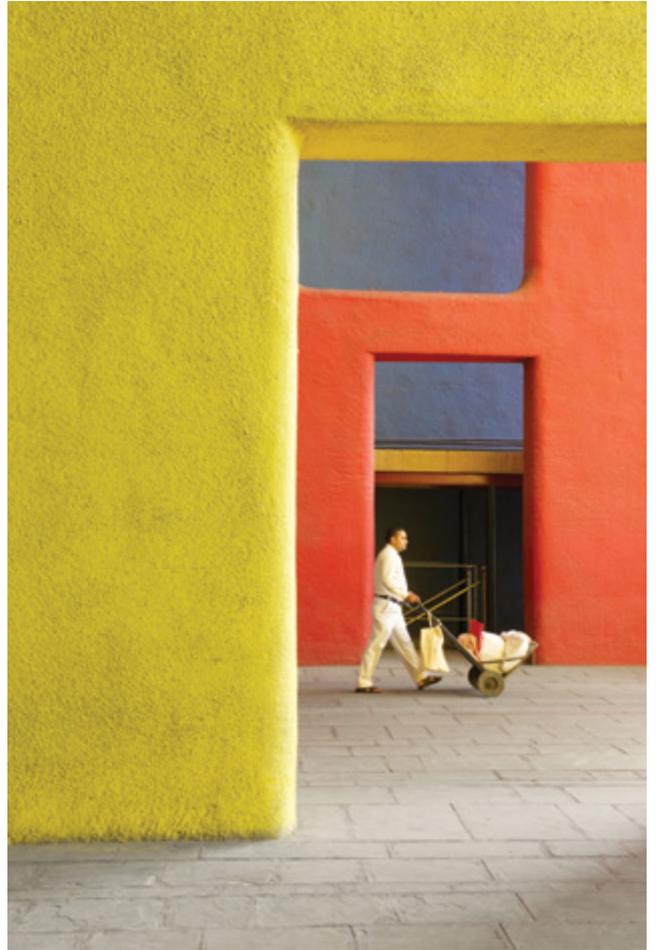
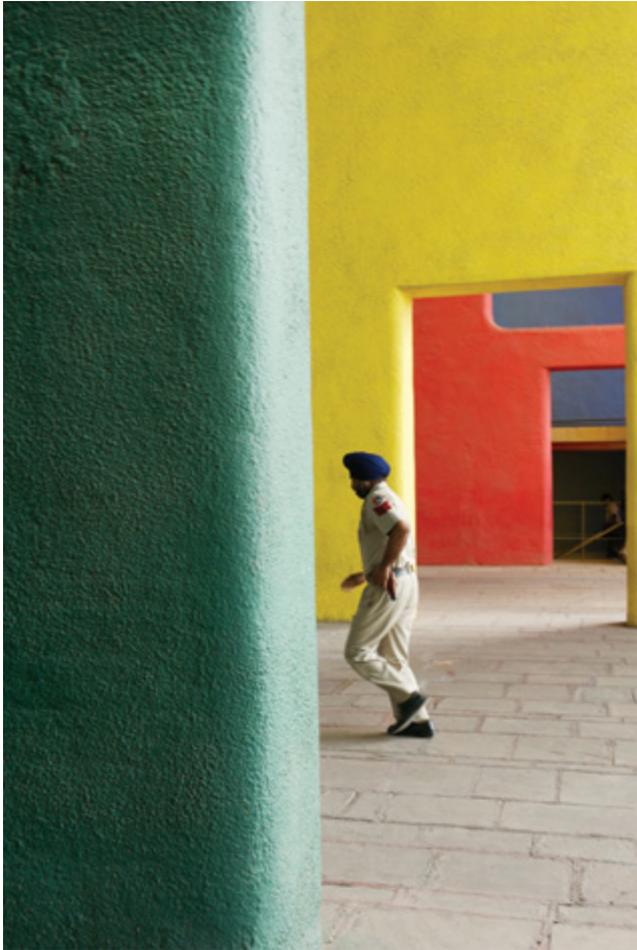
There are issues today, for example the population is twice what Le Corbusier envisaged, which puts pressure on infrastructure and the amount of land for agriculture. But for the most part, this orderly modernist experiment is still working."

Chandigarh Revealed: Le Corbusier's City Today
by Shaun Fynn is published by Princeton Architectural Press, 2017.

Right:
Details of the entrance
portal to the Punjab and
Haryana High Court

Below:
A swimming pool,
Sector 23, designed by
Jane B. Drew, 1956





at 12:30pm

on Thursday, February 23

in Melbourne

MORGAN McGLONE

Chef



“Choose to do one thing really well and everyday try to get better and better at it... For me, that thing was fried chicken.”



Morgan is feted in Australia as the king of fried chicken, his Belles Hot Chicken restaurants have opened in Melbourne and Sydney to great acclaim and he's proud that he managed to do what most thought was impossible: Taken the cliché of fried chicken as fast food and elevated it. And now he's brought his fried chicken and Southern States cuisine experience to Hong Kong.

“With Belles, I just wanted to really purposefully make our fried chicken so different from that other fast food style. To refine it and still create a casual dining environment.

We pride ourselves that the food is great and the service is even better. We want customers to have a great experience of casual dining alongside what's on their plate – good prices, great music, fantastic drinks, beer and wine, and then that famous service. I learned that working in South Carolina. Southern hospitality is not a cliché, it's real and I wanted to bring that to Australia, and now to Hong Kong.

I love to dine and eat out at least twice a week, and I can forgive something not quite right with the food; I've worked as a chef since I was 17 so know the kitchen can sometimes have an off day or get something wrong, but the service has to be

amazing all the time. You can have okay food with great service and you'll have a better experience than great food with bad service.”

Together with Yenn Wong, the entrepreneur behind Hong Kong's JIA group of restaurants, he's now opened Commissary, a Southern California inspired restaurant.

“I met Yenn, the owner who runs all these restaurants in Hong Kong, about 18 months ago and I was saying that I'd love to take my idea of fried chicken to Asia and we came up with the idea for Commissary. I worked with a really great team on our Southern California Latino-style menu, with our chef de cuisine Adam Shoebridge, who I'd worked with before in Charleston and Australia, and then on the design and the drinks. It all came together really well.

The thing with this type of cuisine – burgers, tacos, good sides, and fried chicken – is yes, it's comfort food, but I don't want it to be like fast food. I want to make a good night of it – the chicken has to be amazing, it's cooked to order never precooked, and then you need to create an amazing atmosphere and a fun place to eat. You know, I still go to KFC twice a year just to have that reality check, just to make sure that what we're doing is still really good and different.”

Chef McGlone's Cooking Notes:

Pisco sour – “This is my favorite drink on the menu – a Peruvian classic.”

Fish tacos, green goddess and cabbage slaw – “We use beer-battered strips of black cod, dipped in the batter then carefully fried at 180°C, served on our tortilla with green goddess (a Southern dressing of coriander, basil, parsley, chives and dill with mayo and sour cream) and then a cabbage slaw tossed with jalapeno vinaigrette...”

Cauliflower, fennel pollen and honey butter – “This is so good. We needed another side for the menu and thought we'd try cauliflower. We didn't know if it'd be popular but it's really proven to be. We do it like a confit with three heads of cauliflower in a pan and then ladling butter and oil over it, basting it for thirty minutes. Then we add manuka honey and fennel pollen.”

Deviled eggs – “We do ours Southern style: Take the cooked yolk out, mix it with mustard powder, mayo, jalapeno and then serve it topped with salmon egg roe and chives. They're so good.”

Southern fried chicken sandwich and fries – “We make our own brioche bun and it's toasted in butter. Then we only use chicken thighs with the skin still on, brine it for four hours and flour it, then it's fried at 180°C for eight to nine minutes. Then we add some chipotle mayo and cabbage slaw.”

at 12:14pm
on Saturday, February 26
in London

Daniel Kelly
Gallerist and Hairdresser

Viewing art inside the white void of a gallery can invite feelings of self-consciousness. How long do we linger at each piece before moving on? Are we allowed to talk or should we view in silence? These questions are subverted at DKUK, a South London gallery offering visitors haircuts while they view artwork. Owner, curator and chief stylist Daniel Kelly created the concept as an alternative to the atmosphere of the contemporary art scene.

“I trained as a hairdresser, but moved to London to study painting at Camberwell College of Art. I worked as an artist doing performance work and video art but got bored of the contemporary art world and its pressures. I was wondering how to support an art practice without pandering to the commercial art world.”

The idea came to him by chance and Kelly says people who don't go to galleries use the familiarity of the salon as an excuse to view the art.

“A friend went away and let me borrow his gallery space, so I tried using it as a salon. It totally changed the demographic of the people coming to see what was on display. Having your hair cut is a familiar experience to everyone, and this environment seems to make people more comfortable to talk about the art and just say what they think.”

But is the haircutting functional or in itself a piece of installation art?

“There's not a solid answer to that and I think that's what's interesting about this place, the slippery boundary between the two activities.”

DKUK's space has just been re-designed by London based architect Sam Jacob, who was drawn to the idea of how architecture frames what happens inside it. Jacob's own work was on show during our visit, including a sound installation that plays to those having their hair washed.

“I used reflections architecturally; as the central idea is that you don't have a mirror in front of you, it seemed perversely interesting to use mirrors differently, to create spatial sensations – making a column disappear, giving a sensation of infinite space. It's a very unusual experience. You start to look and think about the art in front of you in ways you wouldn't in an abstract 'White Cube' art gallery. Something else – something part of everyday life – is happening too.”



Words: NICK TAYLOR, Photography: SAMUEL HICKS

“Artists respond really well to the limitations of the space.”



at 8:27pm

on Thursday, April 22

in Cape Town, South Africa

CYRIL COETZEE

Artist-in-residence,
Belmond Mount
Nelson Hotel, Cape Town

Cyril Coetzee is best known for being Nelson Mandela's portraitist and since the beginning of the year has been available for guest portraits and classes at the Mount Nelson Hotel.

"Whilst on the premises I do not work in a dedicated studio, but meet the clients for sittings in the gardens, the conservatory or in the client's suite. Most of the work is done in my home studio in Cape Town. I am only at the hotel when I need to meet and work

with the clients, making drawings or taking photographs.

When I first got involved in the residency I did a number of samples to display in the hotel – including one of a child and one of the hotel manager. Subsequently I've done a portrait of an elderly American lady called Joy Briar who is something of a doyenne of the hotel, having frequented the place for decades. Her three daughters commissioned me to paint a portrait of her to hang in the hotel.

Working in the hotel environment can be challenging as well as exciting. Exciting because I am deeply fascinated by new faces and one does meet interesting people from all over the world. I like to sit in the lounge and watch them having their tea or at the pool having their drinks. And it is challenging, because as a portrait painter you deal not only with your own perception of people but with their perception of themselves and of how you as the artist are portraying them."

*"I am deeply
fascinated
by new faces."*





at 10:27pm
on Wednesday, April 21
in San Jose Del Capo,
Mexico

ALDO CHAPARRO

Artist-in-residence,
El Ganzo Hotel,
San Jose Del Capo

*“My best creative moments
are always full of joy.”*

Luzma Moctezuma, the curator of El Ganzo, has invited many different artists to spend time working there, including Peruvian artist Aldo Chaparro, whose art focuses on sculpture and architecture and who was resident at the hotel during April.

“I’m working on four pieces here, two of them canvases of raw linen based on my physical actions and the other two based on the cycle of the sun. One of these consists of objects I found on the beach. As I picked them up I tried to remember how sunlight shone on them in order to cover that part of the surface with gold leaf.

The last piece took me more time. I spent several days watching the shapes that the sunlight made on the

floors and walls of the terrace. I covered the areas with gold leaf in an effort to push the power of the sunlight in a specific time frame. The true piece happens only once a day.

My studio work has to do with the different commitments I have, like exhibitions, commissions, deadlines, and production. Here in the hotel everything is different: It’s all about experimentation, improvisation and creation. I have the largest suite in the hotel with a terrace that overlooks the sea and I have my family by my side. My best creative moments are always full of joy; when I am happy problems seem to vanish. The best part of working in a place like this is that you can work organically, there’s no routine. Every day has been a different experience.”



“Business success doesn’t matter much if we can’t say we left the world a better place than we found it.”

David Kohler, President and CEO



With around a quarter of the world’s population lacking access to safe drinking water (1.8 billion people), providing this essential resource is both a key social and design problem that needs to be solved.

With this in mind, we developed the KOHLER® Clarity™ water filter – an elegant table top unit that can provide up to 40 liters of safe water each day by filtering out more than 99% of bacteria and protozoa.

The water filters themselves were the result of a concerted global effort by the company: Designed in the UK, engineered in India and produced in the USA.

They had to work reliably and be very simple to understand, operate and maintain – ready for use straight out of the box.

Each one works on gravity alone – the upper section holding 11 liters of dirty water that methodically passes two liters

an hour through a ceramic filtration core into the 12-liter lower tank ready for drinking from the tap.

Together with NGOs and non-profit groups, we are working on distributing KOHLER Clarity around the world, from Myanmar to Lebanon to Zambia.

Last year for example, filters were distributed in Louisiana, USA, after the summer’s flooding and in Haiti, following the widespread destruction caused by fall’s Hurricane Matthew. We partnered with Water Mission to distribute not just KOHLER Clarity water filters, but also Kohler generators that pumped 80,000 liters of clean water to villages every day.

As Alex Williams, Lead Industrial Designer, explains: **“You’re dealing with a project that is absolutely trans-global and have to make sure everyone can understand it, keep the colors as simple as possible so they are universally accepted and don’t mean something different to a certain culture. Living in India was a good**

insight into this, we all had first hand experiences on drinking unsafe water and eating unsafe food; it’s not always the food that is unsafe, it’s the water used to wash the food.”

Following a year of successful trials and real world applications, we are continuing our mission to distribute KOHLER Clarity through organizations working to deliver safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) initiatives as well as conducting our own global stewardship activities, the first of which is ‘Run for Clarity’.

This is a company challenge this fall, to run a total of 40,075km – the perimeter of the Earth. To achieve this, approx. 5,000 Kohler associates, distributors and their families need to run at least 5km each. Once the distance goal is reached, we’ll provide 5,000 Clarity water filters to communities in countries of need.

Learn more: www.kohler.design and runforclarity.com



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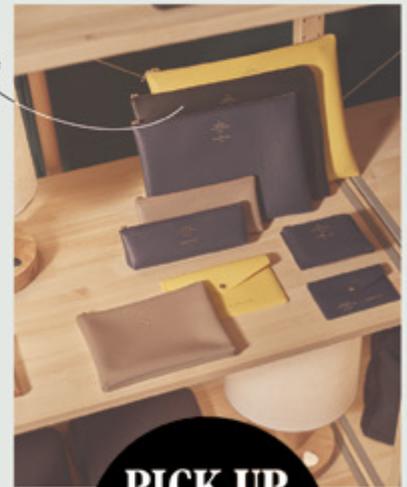
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