

In the spotlight

Nick Vinson selects outstanding items from the Imm Cologne and Maison & Objet design fairs



Nick Vinson is special projects director at Wallpaper* magazine

Inga Sempé
Ruché

Presented by French furnituremaker Ligne Roset at both fairs in Cologne and Maison & Objet in Paris, Ruché is a sofa by French designer Inga Sempé, who works on a realistic scale and created this compact piece for a smaller apartment. Airy and light, it comprises a solid beechwood frame (shown here in square-limbed grey) topped off with a kind of divot, an idea Sempé took from tubular garden furniture with seat cushions that are used outside only in the summer. Although it appears that the quilted cover has been simply thrown over the structure, it is actually more of a mattress construction: a complex combination of layers of foam and a sprung steel grill giving stability and comfort. Sempé takes great care with all the details, such as the *no crimp* bevelled feet (that give more elegance to the shape) and the design of the quilting, first developed in her studio on a small sewing machine and now produced by programmable robots. By interrupting cross-hatch *boutis* stitches, the flattened fabric curls up and creates a three-dimensional ruffling effect. Full of light and shade, it is most pleasing in velvet, as pictured here. £3,700-£4,075. www.ligne.com

Mathieu Lehanneur
Delicious

This year is the 10th anniversary of Now!, Design à Vivre, a dynamic design fair within Maison & Objet. Each year since 2000 it has exhibited the work of one major talent as Now! Designer of the Year, which has included big hitters such as Konstantin Grcic and Patricia Urquiola. To celebrate a decade, the fair, along with Philippe Starck acting as "godfather", has selected 10 younger, lesser-known talents, such as Sam Baron, Philippe Negro and Mathieu Lehanneur. Their selection is bound to further raise their profile. Lehanneur, 35, set up his Paris-based agency in 2001 and works on commissions for industrial, interior and exhibition design. Delicious, a stackable storage system, comprises four differently sized units constructed from wafer-patterned, polished, stainless steel sheet that has been colour-varnished. The pattern is familiar from the Manhattan hot dog cart - when he first designed them in 2008 Lehanneur wanted to bring a small part of New York to Paris - although it is repackaged in a deluxe gallery produced version lined in ash and teamed with leather handles. £1,900. www.doolab.com

Patrick Jouin
Zermatt

Paris-based industrial designer and interior architect Jouin is known for the city's free Vélis bikes and his interiors for smart restaurants such as Alain Ducasse at the Plaza Athénée and Le Jules Verre at the Eiffel Tower. The launch of Zermatt, his polished stainless steel flatware, by silversmith Pufforici during Maison & Objet is well timed, as a significant exhibition of Jouin's design work, *Le Substance du Design*, is due to open on February 17 at the Pompidou Centre and means Pufforici's new range goes straight into the museum's permanent collection. Zermatt is exquisite, with confident and elegant facets that Jouin has made slightly concave to sharpen the points and "make the reflections more interesting". His starting point was the knife, which is all one piece, with a blade that will never touch the tabletop when set to rest. He describes Zermatt as a fluid design "like liquid metal that froze". The pieces have a good weight to them, which reinforces the tactile sense of quality. These are tools "to caress the hand", so the physical sensation is important than the look. £40-£75 per piece. www.patrickjouin.com

D.lab
Bic and Bicc

A highlight at Maison & Objet for the past three years has been the small but impressive stand of d.lab from Singapore. D.lab is the trademark of the Design Incubation Centre, part of the department of architecture at the National University of Singapore. The centre is a research laboratory that aims to investigate and develop new possibilities in the practice of design. Three years ago it displayed a series of products made in Kotan and took at Maison & Objet and the reaction was so positive that they are being produced in limited editions of 100 pieces. The Bic and Bicc lamps, part of a series of new products called Objects Around the Table, have been designed by d.lab under the creative direction of Patrick Chia, the young director of the Design Incubation Centre. The bases are blocks of palau wood and the shades are perforated and folded aluminium sheet that has been matt powder coated. What might not show up so well in photography (and on pink paper) is the deep intensity of the colour: the matt finish gives a really saturated hue like that in an Alessi Kapoor piece. £50 and £300. www.designincubationcentre.com

Hervé Van der Straeten
Pipe show

Readers of these pages will know that I am a bit of a fan of Van der Straeten's work. The French are also fans and awarded him the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, a state honour for outstanding achievement in the arts. Each year he presents one new show, usually just a few days after Maison & Objet, at his gallery in Le Marais. Maison & Objet overlaps with men's fashion week and the haute couture shows so Paris events with a sophisticated and wealthy crowd - just the sort of people who collect his precious limited edition works hand made in his own workshops in Paris. His new show, *Manipulations*, will run until the end of April. This console, called Pipe Show, is made of tubes of polished golden brass. It is a typical Van der Straeten piece: full of manipulated movement, a kind of organised chaos, a cross between architecture and sculpture. His work is always unique and rarely can you spot the references. He has a hint of retro glamour from the *arts décoratifs* (mainly evoked by the materials he employs, such as precious woods, rare marbles, brass, bronze, lacquer and parchment) but the work is always new and always his own. £26,000. www.consoe.com

Campana brothers
Blow up-bamboo

Alessi, a regular fixture at Maison & Objet, presented several (new products) from an international pool of designers including Harri Koskinen from Helsinki, Malin Cresset with pastry chef Pierre Hermé from Paris, Jasper Morrison from London, Piero Lissoni from Milan and, all the way from São Paulo, Brazil, Fernando and Humberto Campana. The pair are known for inventive and expressive transformations of poor day-to-day materials into highly prized collectible works of art/design and their Alessi objects are probably the most affordable examples of their work in the market. The pair started working with Italian powerhouse Alessi in 2001 on Blow Up, a small and by now very successful series in polished stainless steel that includes a small table, two dishes and a magazine rack. Five years on they have decided to produce it in bamboo. For me, this hand made version is truer to the Campana spirit and represents their original concept from 2001, as in place of sketches they sent Alessi prototypes in bamboo to explain their idea. €65. www.alessi.com

D.lab Bic and Boc



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the trademark of the Design Incubation Centre, part of the department of architecture at the School of Design and Environment at the National University of Singapore. The centre is a research laboratory that aims to investigate and develop new possibilities in the practice of design. Three years ago it displayed a series of products made in Corian and teak at Maison & Objet and the reaction was so positive that they are being produced in limited editions of 100 pieces.

The Bic and Boc lamps, part of a series of new products called Objects Around the Tablescape, have been designed by d.lab under the creative direction of Patrick Chia, the young director of the Design Incubation Centre. The bases are blocks of palau wood and the shades are perforated and folded aluminium sheet that has been matt powder coated. What might not show up so well in photography (and on pink paper) is the deep intensity of the colour: the matt finish gives a really saturated hue like that in an Anish Kapoor piece. €560 and €580. www.designincubationcentre.com



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