

# BEYOND DESIGN: 4<sup>TH</sup> FURNITURE DESIGN FORUM 2006

TEXT BY ELAINE LEE

IMAGES COURTESY OF SINGAPORE FURNITURE INDUSTRIES COUNCIL

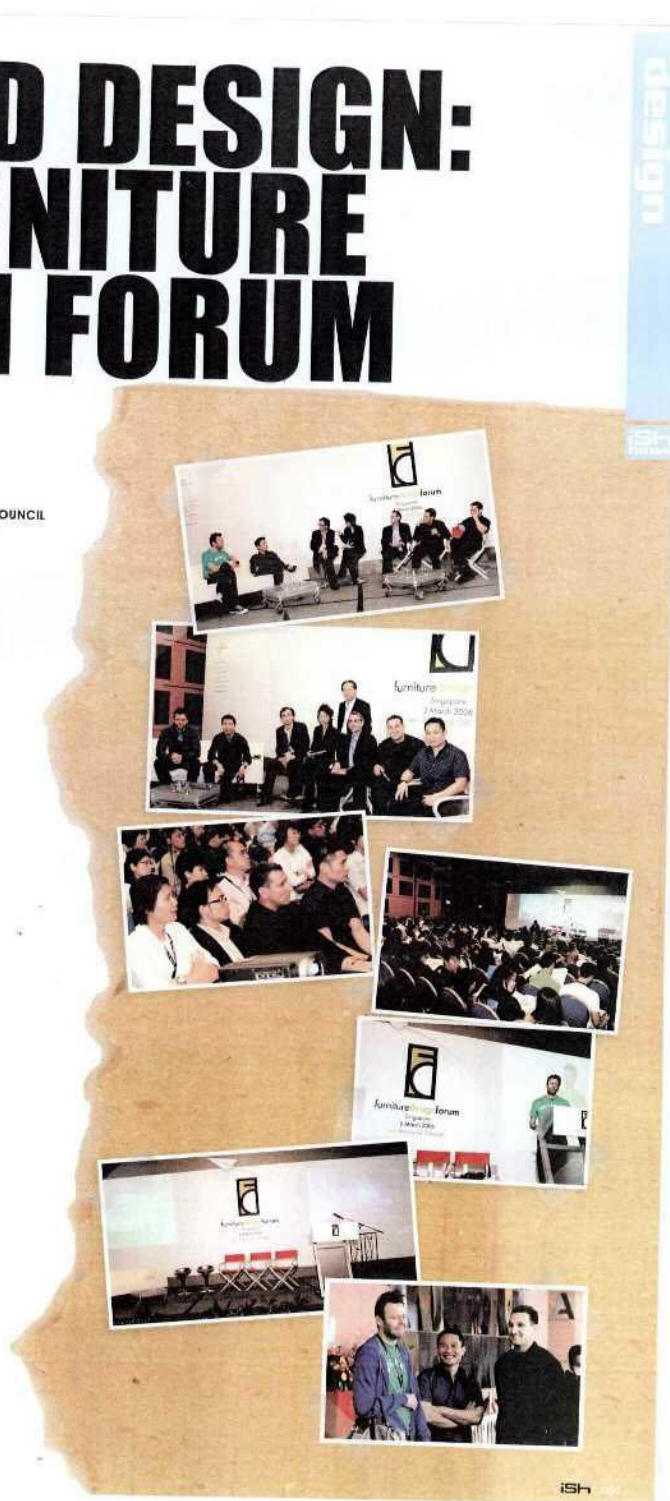
When design mavericks gather to explore notions beyond design, it cannot be more diversified or comprehensive than what was covered by the four eminent speakers at the 4<sup>th</sup> Furniture Design Forum 2006 - Michael Young, Voon Wong, Douglas Young and Thomas Jacobson. With the focus of the forum on progression and adaptability, "Beyond Design" took the issue of staying relevant in the industry by the horn. The up close and personal session with these internationally distinguished designers reinforced that there is no conflict of interest between furniture design and business success.

Speaking from knowledge and expertise, the speakers covered through the business of design, to fundamentals of research. Between them, they respectively tackled topics of "Diversity in Design"; "Research and Development"; shared insights to developing an Asian brand and the role of good designs in today's business world; and elaborated on "Furniture in the Hospitality Industry and the External Environment".

Organised for the fourth year, in conjunction with the International Furniture Fair Singapore 2006, the forum was attended by more than 250 guests comprising design enthusiasts, furniture trade practitioners, designers and students. Closing the interactive forum was a lively panel discussion moderated by Mr Andrew Pang, vice chairman of the SFIC Design Development Committee and Ms Kelley Cheng, editorial director of Page One Publishing and this very magazine.

Backstage, *iSh* coaxed the four designers from their pedestal and hectic schedules for a spot of frivolous Victorian indulgence - filling out irrelevant questionnaires. Popular in the parlours and salons of bygone years, the series of questions posed were recreated to reveal thoughts, values and experiences. *iSh* presents to you their answers - lock, stock and barrel - to reveal the personality behind brilliant designs that sells.

Beyond Design: FDF 2006 is a forum in conjunction with the International Furniture Fair Singapore 2006/23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Furniture Show and Furniture Design Award 2006. For more information, visit [www.ifs.com.sg](http://www.ifs.com.sg)



design  
iSh

# SUSPENSION STATE. MICHAEL YOUNG

TEXT BY ELAINE LEE  
IMAGES COURTESY OF MICHAEL YOUNG  
PORTRAITURE COURTESY OF MICHAEL YOUNG

Michael Young Studio has periodically shifted its base in the past 13 years - from England, up to Iceland, down to Taiwan and most recently, across to Hong Kong. Through it all, Michael Young himself remains quintessentially British. After all those years at the forefront of product design, he is probably still the bloke you find at the pub round the corner who speaks of humanity, humility and happiness so earnestly he could not possibly be fibbing. In 2002, he followed the footsteps of Philippe Stark, Gio Ponti and Vener Pantor to become the guest of honour at the Kortrijk Design Biennale. Michael Young is easily amongst the most successful and influential designers of his generation, with clients including Casperini, Sawaya & Morini, Atemide, Magis, Galley Krea, Danese, Artemide, Rosenthal and Swedese. He founded M.Y. Studio in 2000 with his wife, Katrin Petursdottir, and their business has brought him to the heart of the East in recent years. "I did not feel like an alien in Taipei or China. I like to think it is because of my humility but it could be because I am more naive." Described by Italian industrialist, Eugenio Perazza, as a "man in a state of suspension", his works have been acquired by institutions such as Centre Pompidou, the Louvre Museum, Die Neue Sammlung Museum Germany and the Design Museum London.

Michael Young Studio is located at Ground Floor, No. 1 New Street, Shaung Wan, Hong Kong. ROC. For enquiries kindly contact: Tel: (852) 2803-0344; Fax: (852) 2803-2444. Email: info@michaelyoung.com or visit www.michael-young.com



MICHAEL YOUNG, FOUNDER  
MICHAEL YOUNG STUDIO, HONG KONG



1. The Souggy is a House sparrow.
2. Larsch refers to Gary Larson, who was born in 1950. He is the creator of The Far Side, a comic panel, which appeared in newspapers for 14 years.
3. Lemmy refers to the bassist, singer and songwriter of Motorhead, Lemmy Kilmister.
4. Motorhead is an iconic British heavy metal band formed in 1975 by bassist, singer and songwriter Lemmy Kilmister.
5. Marko Mori, born in 1967, is a Japanese video and photographic artist.
6. Pol Pot was the ruler of the Khmer Rouge and the Prime Minister of Cambodia (officially Democratic Kampuchea) during his rule from 1976 to 1979.

To Elaine Lee From My

The Infamous Proust Questionnaire as mentioned in Andre Maurois's

### Proust: Portrait of a Genius

my main trait is...

TRYING TO BE OPTIMISTIC

quality I admire in a man...

HONOUR

quality I admire in a woman...

BEAUTY + A SMILE

I value in friends...

100%

my principle defect...

CAN NOT FOCUS ON THING

my ideal occupation...

WHAT I AM

my ultimate dream...

TO FIND PEACE WITHIN

it would be most unfortunate if...

I WENT BLIND

I would like to be...

HEALTHIER PERSON

I would like to live in...

A PLASTIC BUBBLE

my favorite color...

WHITE

my favorite flower...

CHERRY BLOSSOM

my favorite bird...

THE SOUGGY

my favorite author...

LARSON

my favorite poet...

LEMMY

my favorite fictitious hero...

SNOOPY

my favorite fictitious heroine...

WONDER WOMAN

my favorite composers...

MOTORHEAD

my favorite painters...

MARKI MORI

my hero in real life...

LEMMY

my favorite historical heroine...

my favorite names...

JOKILL

I dislike...

NEGATIVE PEOPLE

historical figures I despise...

POL POT

military event I admire...

CHANGING OF THE GUARDS

reforms I admire...

SINGERS TO STOP DEATH SENTENCE

natural gift I want...

PLAY PIANO

I would like to die...

SURROUNDED BY CHICKS

faults I indulge...

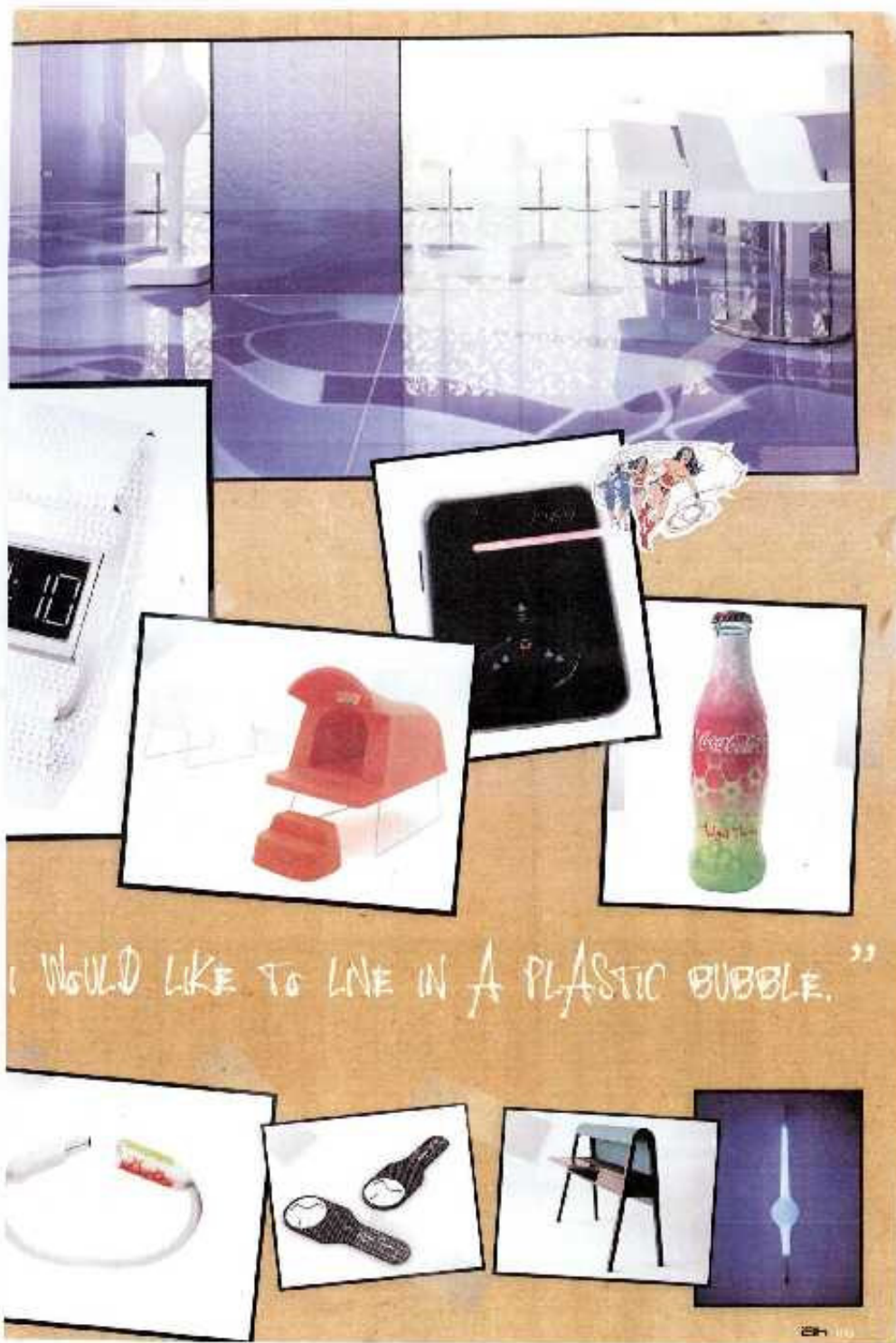
ST ABOUT DRINKING BEER

my motto...

SILENCE IS DEATH



write you soon (Michael)



I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE IN A PLASTIC BUBBLE."

# PROBLEM SOLVING

# VOON WONG

TEXT BY ELAINE LEE  
IMAGES COURTESY OF VOON WONG  
PORTRAITURE COURTESY OF VOON WONG

Voon Wong maintains, "Good design has a lot to do with problem-solving." Architecturally trained at the National University of Singapore and the Architectural Association in London, as far as designing is concerned, to him it is about identifying the problem and plotting a route of action to incorporate aesthetics and cultural relevance. It is the incorporated relevance, which he believes will give rise to originality and unique identity that is crucial and relevant to designers and Singapore as a design hub. This refreshing view, as all refreshing views go, is not as simplistic as it is made out to be, considering the acclaims his designs swept. His LOOP lamp was shortlisted for the prestigious Compasso d'Oro in 2004, and his ELma vases won him the OXO lighting prize in 2002. Through it all, Voon has doggedly maintained a design process, which emphasises on developing ideas from original thoughts, inspired by the surrounding environment and translated into finished products for the mass market. He has been collaborating with his Malaysian partner Benson Saw since 2001, before they established voonwong@bensonsaw in 2002. They have since developed designs for clients such as Fontana Arte, Porro and Kirin, as well as self-produced a range of tableware and accessories. Their works have been exhibited in London, Cologne, Milan and Singapore.

voonwong@bensonsaw is located at Unit 27, 1 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AD, United Kingdom. For enquiries kindly contact: Tel: +44 201 7587 9118, Fax: +44 20 7840 0178. Email: info@voon-benson.com or visit www.voon-benson.com



VOON WONG, FOUNDER,  
voonwong@bensonsaw, UNITED KINGDOM

The infamous Proust Questionnaire as mentioned in Andre Maurois's

### Proust: Portrait of a Genius

my main trait is... an art retentiveness

quality I admire in a man... sense of irony

quality I admire in a woman... sense of humour

I value in friends... then indulgence

my principle defect... help donation

my ideal occupation... artist

my ultimate dream... to get more sleep

it would be most unfortunate if... I didn't get enough sleep

I would like to be... more charitable

I would like to live in... a perfect climate

my favorite color... navy

my favorite flower... plum

my favorite bird... hummingbird

my favorite author... Charles M Schulz

my favorite poet... Octavio Paz

my favorite fictitious hero... Holden Caulfield

my favorite fictitious heroine... Lisa Lund

my favorite composers... Bach

my favorite painters... Beatriz Milhazes

my hero in real life... Ang Sam Sui Kip

my favorite historical heroine... Vita Sackville West

my favorite names... Florence

I dislike... various spectacles

Historical figures I despise... En Khix Kiam

military event I admire... my conscription

reforms I admire... civil partnership

natural gift I want... gift of singing

I would like to die... when I'm ready

faults I indulge... ebony

my motto... protect me from wh I want.

1. Octavio Paz was the Mexican writer, poet, and diplomat who was born in 1914. He was the winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature.

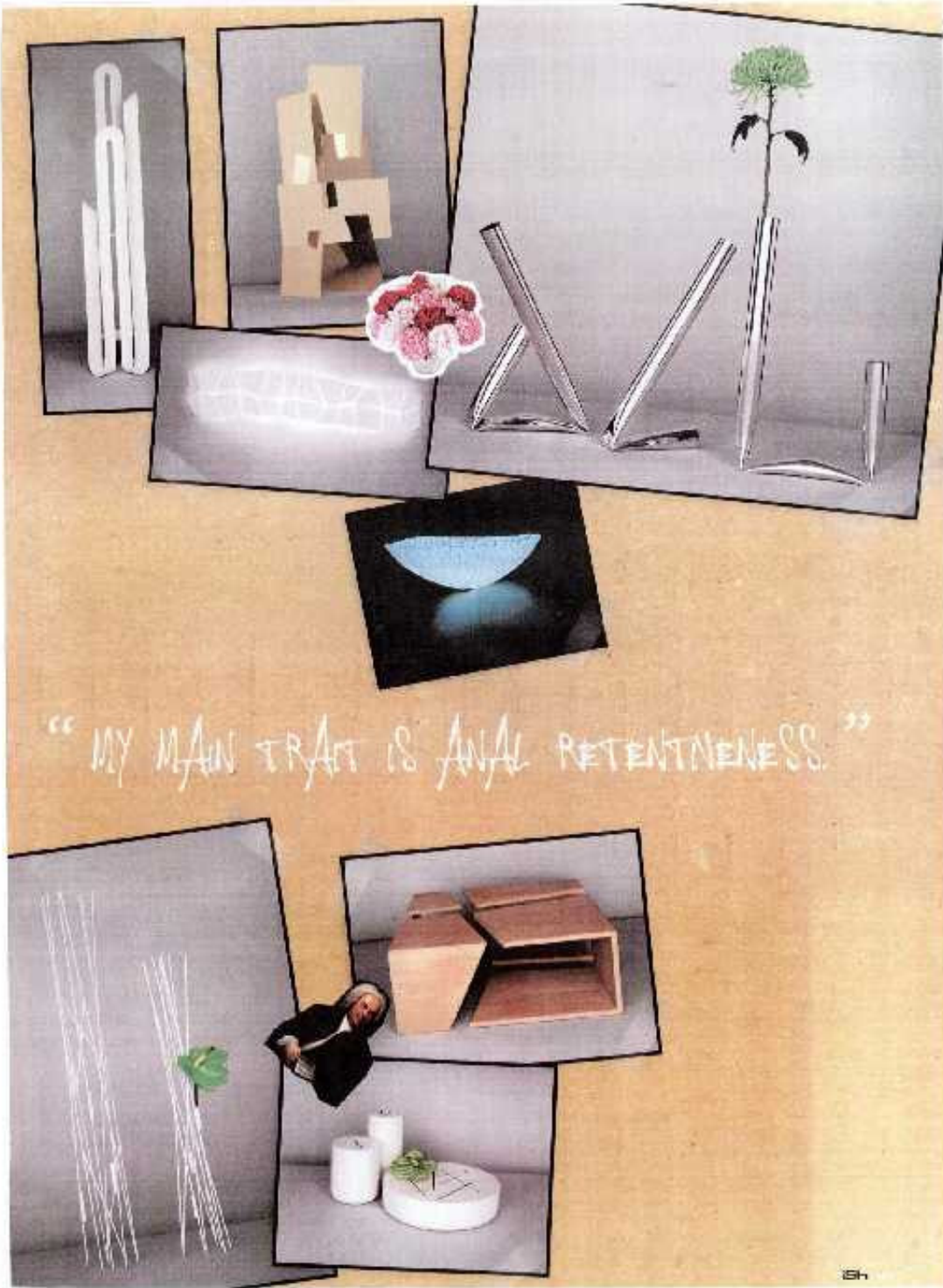
2. Holden Caulfield is the fictional teenage protagonist in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, first published in 1951.

3. Lisa Lund is the fictional heroine played by Ingrid Bergman in Michael Curtiz's 1942 film, *Casablanca*.

4. Beatriz Milhazes, born in 1960, is a Brazilian painter.

5. Vita Sackville West, born in 1892, was an English poet, novelist and gardener. She was the winner of the Hawththornden Prize in 1927 and 1933.

6. "My Conscription" refers to the compulsory National Service Voon served in Singapore.



"MY MAIN TRAIT IS ANAL RETENTIVENESS."

# EXTRAORDINARY MUNDANE:

# DOUGLAS YOUNG

TEXT BY ELAINE LEE  
IMAGES COURTESY OF DOUGLAS YOUNG  
PORTRAITURE COURTESY OF DOUGLAS YOUNG

The infamous Proust Questionnaire as mentioned in Andre Maurois's

**Proust: Portrait of a Genius**

my main trait is... that of a provocateur

quality I admire in a man... tenderness

quality I admire in a woman... decisiveness

I value in friends... honesty

my principle defect... I was only born with one brain

my ideal occupation... prostitution

my ultimate dream... to have no more nightmares

it would be most unfortunate if... we ran out of luck

I would like to be... myself

I would like to live in... Tang Dynasty China

my favorite color... Gold

my favorite flower... Gingerlily

my favorite bird... Arctic tern

my favorite author... Alan Houghhurst

my favorite poet... Alvaro Siza

my favorite fictitious hero... Tom of Finland

my favorite fictitious heroine... Miss Money Penny

my favorite composers... JS Bach, Ar. The Stones

my favorite painters... Manet, Rothko, Caravaggio, Valasquez

my hero in real life... Sir Thomas More

my favorite historical heroine... 楊貴妃

my favorite names... Enzo, Ferdinand, Ferruccio

I dislike... opening CD wrappers, people talking in cinemas...

historical figures I despise... George W. Bush

military event I admire... Alexander The Great vs Darius III

reforms I admire... Sharon Stone's makeover

natural gift I want... ability to read the mind

I would like to die... before I start losing it

fauxits I indulge... sleeping

my motto... change is the only constant.. so delay no more!



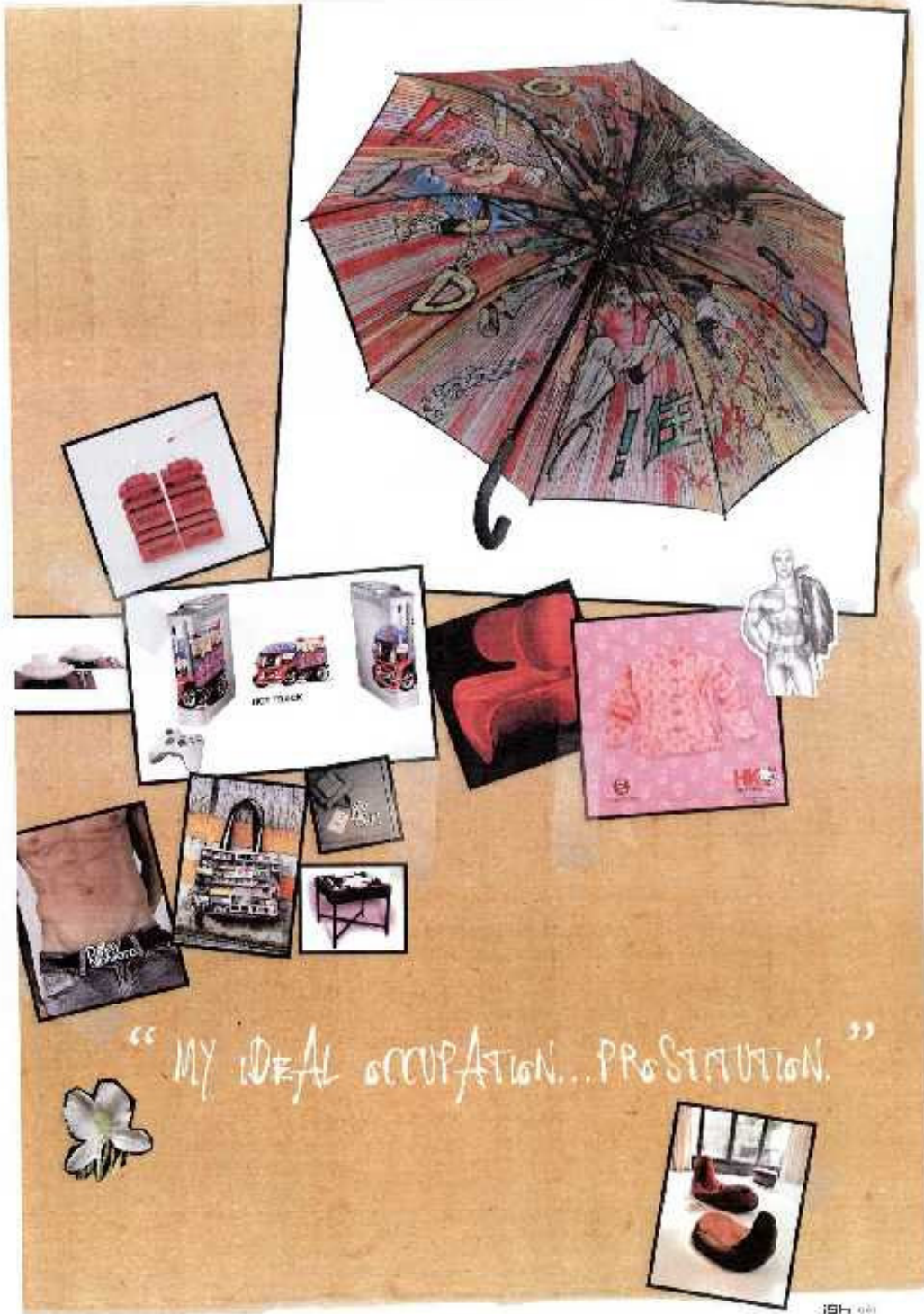
It takes cheekiness to pull off a store called G.O.D. which founder Douglas Young justifies with phonetic associations to the Cantonese term for "live-better". This shrewdness, bordering on guile, is just brilliant. Established in 1996 with partner Benjamin Lau, G.O.D. tries "to push Hong Kong traditions, to make the ordinary and mundane into something extraordinary." Having spent his teenage years in an English boarding school, Young trained and worked as an architect in London before returning to Hong Kong in the early '90s to realise that old trades and techniques were fast disappearing. G.O.D. set about to define contemporary Chinese by using the elements of Chinese culture as raw materials for tweaking. Through its range of contemporary furniture, homeware, lifestyle accessories and merchandise, G.O.D. taps into the local and expatriate's shared love for the city's energy and potential, to create a definitive brand that epitomises the Hong Kong east-meets-west culture and lifestyle. Young's flare in distilling unique designs and style from the cluttered cityscape has gained him much business success and accolades. His recent win at the Business of Design Week, which applauds good designs for business growth, affirms that cultural heritage is a new branding to be reckoned with.

G.O.D. Ltd is located at 25/F, Morrison Plaza, 8 Morrison Hill Road, Hong Kong, ROC. For enquiries kindly contact:  
Tel: (852) 2544-5615; Fax: (852) 2543-9337; Email: yby@god.com.hk or visit www.god.com.hk



DOUGLAS YOUNG, FOUNDER, G.O.D. (GOODS OF DESIRE), HONG KONG

1. Yang Guifei, also known as "Secondary-consort Yang", was the favourite consort of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang China. She was one of the Four Beauties of ancient China.



“MY IDEAL OCCUPATION... PROSTITUTION.”

# TECHNICAL CREATIVITY:

# THOMAS JACOBSEN

TEXT BY ELAINE LEE  
IMAGES COURTESY OF THOMAS JACOBSEN  
PORTRAITURE COURTESY OF THOMAS JACOBSEN

## The Infamous Proust Questionnaire as mentioned in Andre Maurois's

### Proust: Portrait of a Genius

my main trait is...  
Never give in

quality I admire in a man...  
Being truthful

quality I admire in a woman...  
Being honest

I value in friends...  
Being loyal

my principle defect...  
Expecting too much

my ideal occupation...  
Designing

my ultimate dream...  
To be content

it would be most unfortunate if...  
I died

I would like to be...  
Loved

I would like to live in...  
The ocean

my favorite color...  
Black

my favorite flower...  
I don't have one

my favorite bird...  
Pelican

my favorite author...  
Jules Verne

my favorite poet...  
I don't have one, I'm technically minded

my favorite fictional hero...  
Captain Nemo

my favorite fictional heroine...  
Bibacalla

my favorite composer...<sup>1</sup>  
Felix

my favorite painters...  
Brett Whiteley

my hero in real life...  
Yves Parlier

my favorite historical heroine...  
Liers

my favorite names...  
Nui & Dui

I dislike...  
Liers

historical figures I despise...  
Stalin

military event I admire...  
Gallipoli

reforms I admire...  
Free press

natural gift I want...  
Patience

I would like to die...  
Happy

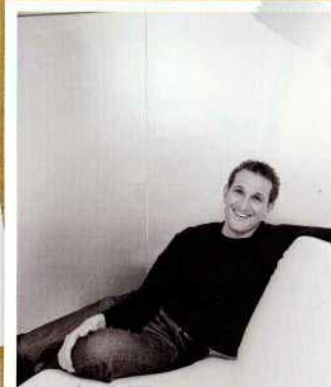
faux I indulge...  
Dryness

my motto...  
Never ever give in always try harder



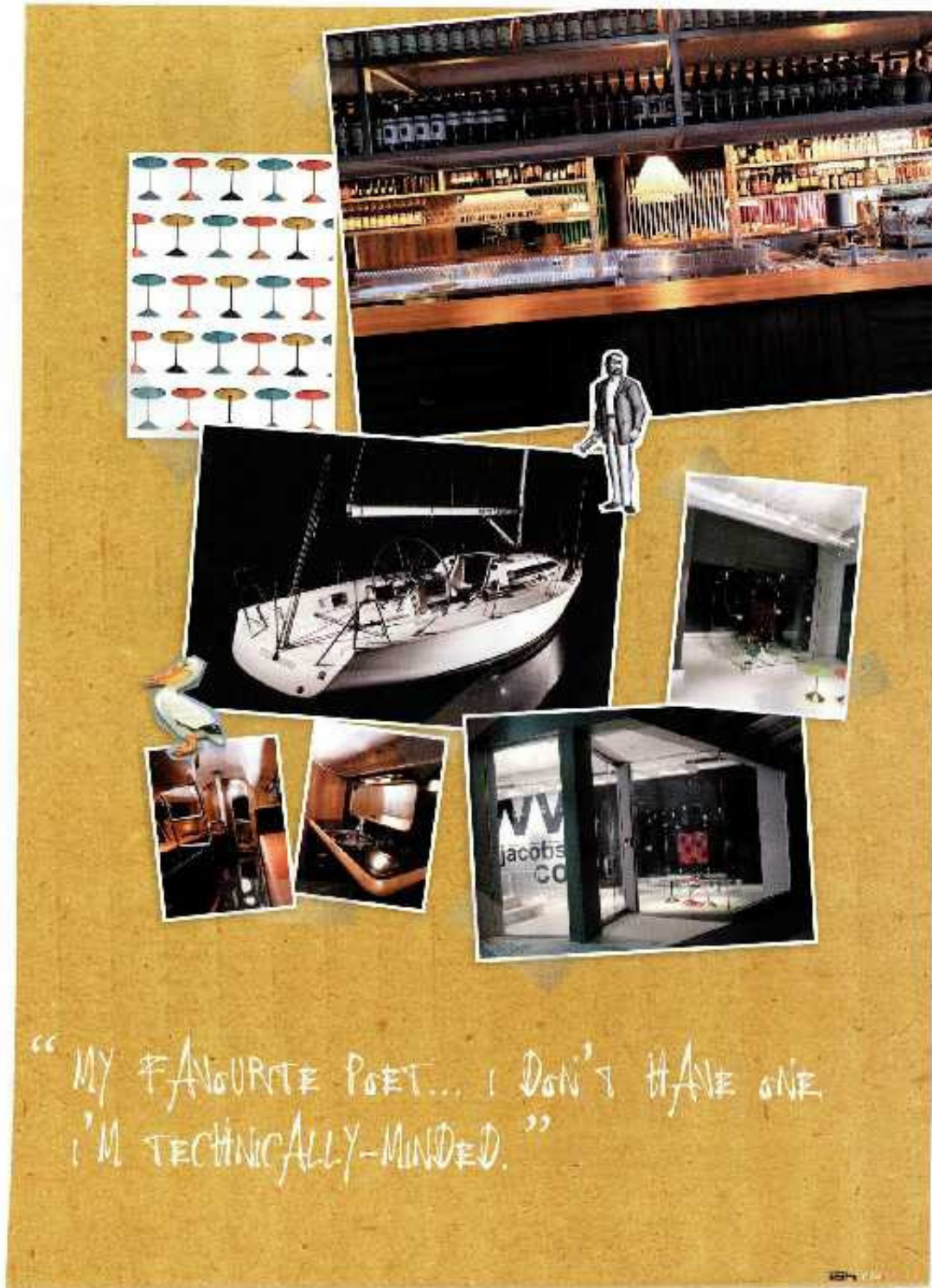
Professionally trained in building and construction, Jacobsen's technical background complemented his eye for design trends, setting him up strategically for a career in furniture design. Claims of being technically-minded should be taken with a pinch of salt, as they belie and undermine the creative premise around which his projects revolve. Located in the front window of his design showroom is a two-metre suspended glass cube, innovated by him and POL Oxygen. The Glass Cube Gallery, which sets out as the new institution for the creatively-inclined, is a purpose-built exhibition space for designers, architects, artists and thinkers. Technically executed with precision, the vessel, which forms the platform for ideas, does not take a back seat. His other design forays include a range of metal furniture inspired by his knowledge of nautical engineering and the harsh Australian outback; a 37-foot racing yacht; hip hair salons and trendy restaurants. Thomas, a winner of the 1998 Best Interior Award by a Young Designer from the Society of Interior Designers of Australia, maintains in his commanding portfolio of high-profile interior and building design projects, a strict Danish design precision with a good mix of cross-pollination across design disciplines.

Thomas Jacobsen MDIA is located at 18A Boundary Street, Darlinghurst 2010, Sydney, Australia. For enquiries kindly contact; Tel: (612) 9367 1509. Fax: (612) 9363 1206. Email: designs@thomasjacobsen.com or visit www.thomasjacobsen.com



THOMAS JACOBSEN, FOUNDER, THOMAS JACOBSEN, AUSTRALIA

1. Felix refers to Felix Mendelssohn, the German composer of the early Romantic period, born in 1809.



“ MY FAVOURITE POET... I DON'T HAVE ONE  
I'M TECHNICALLY-MINDED. ”