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*THE STORY OF
FLEXFORM*

*VILLA VISTA BY
SHIGERU BAN*

THE DESIGN SOCIETY

INSIDE LES AMIS

MILAN
DESIGN
WEEK
2011



**STAYING
POWER**

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→
LIGHT PLAY:
Paper lamps by :plunk
 for the Foundry 2011
 collection at their
 Purvis Street showroom

→
**TAKING
 FLIGHT:**
*Ellix Design's
 installation
 of butterflies*



Design About Town

The local design industry lets its hair down with the first overseas installation of Saturday In Design

Text and Photography by Luo Jingmei unless otherwise stated

ON A PARTICULAR SATURDAY IN MAY THIS YEAR, Singaporeans out and about the central part of town must have been puzzled by a particular fluorescent orange colour popping up all over the place -- strung on lanyards around peoples' necks, on cloth banners and window stickers outside certain shop entrances and on the surfaces of several shuttle buses and Mercedes Benzes plying a certain route. If their curiosity got the better of them and they did wander through the fluorescent-branded doors, they would have found themselves thick in the middle of what was in fact Singapore's very first *Saturday In Design (SID)* event.



SEEING GREEN:
*Geyer's tree-climbing Eames elephants
 outside the Schiavella/Vitra showroom*

Started in 2003 by *Indesign Media Group*, it is an annual trade event for the Australian design community, and now alternates between Sydney, where it premiered, and Melbourne. For one full day, reputable design furniture, finishes and lighting showrooms open their doors to the public. New products (both local and international) are launched, collaborative installations with local creatives and students under the umbrella of *'The Project'* are showcased, and industry professionals (architects, designers, developers, etc.), as well as just about anyone interested in design get to interact.

Why Singapore for its first overseas edition? SID's founder *Raj Nandan* feels that the island has the ingredients to be a global design player with its "energy, ambition, diverse cultural influences, balance of tradition and new technologies and fantastic support from government and associated industry bodies". All it needs is a little nudge, and this is where SID comes in.

After three years of planning and 18 months of work, the event took place on the 21st of May. 32 companies took part in 19 locations in central Singapore, divided into the North, South, West and Central Loop. In the two days leading up, a host of closed-

door activities had already taken place, including guest appearances by *Autoban's Seyhan Özdemir* and *De La Espada's Luis de Olivira* at *Dream Interiors*. German designer *Stefan Diez* also chipped in for a round table discussion organised by *Interior Design Confederation, Singapore* before launching his latest *red dot* award-winning *Chassis* chair for *Wilkahn*.

Held just after the *Salone* in April, SID provided an ideal platform to locally launch new products that debuted in Milan. This included Diez's aforementioned *Chassis* chair, *Foundry's* new collection, the *Bouroullec brother's Osso* chair for *Mattiazzi* at *Pomelo Home*, as well as *Piero Lissoni's* kitchen for *Duemilatto* within *Boffi's* new showroom, bathing a 200-300-year-old pine table in dazzling laser-light display.

Amongst the displays, the event's highlight was undoubtedly *The Project*, themed: *CONNECT*. Indesign's two installations within the *Curated Space* at *Warehouse 72-13* were our favourite in the way they directly and indirectly engaged visitors.

Hansel + Blow Inc. made a life-sized seat and lamp of layered plywood and visitors sitting in them could be captured through a plywood *Habitus* magazine cover. "We imagined ourselves in the magazine and thought we would find something synonymous with reading - a chair, a lamp, a table - and bring it to life, from 2D onto 3D," shares design studio *Blow Inc.'s Michele Low*. Upstairs, local design collective *HJGHER* presented a display of child-like whimsy. An elementary mechanism,



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WORK
"PLAYGROUND":
The Xtra/Herman Miller collaboration for the Alt. Work. Space exhibition

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PLYWOOD PAGES:
Hansel+Blow Inc.'s installation replicates an abstracted, cosy reading corner

For one full day, reputable design furniture, finishes and lighting showrooms open their doors to the public.

mounted on wooden crates, had marbles moving continuously up a pulley and hopping down a valley of *Indesign* publications.

Over at *Dream Interiors*, the idea of 'connecting' took on a more illusory nature. Outside, *HCF and Associate's* bright orange structure of layered construction nets and scaffolding frames begets a double take, its mesh-created shapes evoking an ephemeral "Dream State". Within, *Elixir Design* wove a brilliant tapestry of origami butterflies - representing dreams - suspended over a tableau of white furniture and *kikki.K* stationery.

The event saw student-involvement lightening up the image of more mundane trades like contract furniture and architectural finishes. The *Bene* (in collaboration with *Waldmann Lighting*) showroom was wrapped internally with cardboard cities by *DEWG* and *Nanyang Polytechnic School of Design* while next door, *BW* and *Infinity* collaborated with design practice *HASSEL* and *LASALLE College of the Arts*, their crashed can-figurines playing shadow-puppet.

Meanwhile, *Xtra* takes the prize for the most energetic participation. At the sixth-storey car park, designers made use of office chairs in the most unconventional manner as they fought for the *Herman Miller Aeron Hockey Championship* (which by the way, was won by *Woodhead*). Down in the basement with four exhibits, the *Contrac-Image* and *InterfaceFLOR* installation had visitors queuing up to take polaroid pictures and pinning them onto a colourful display of spools and connecting thread.

If the enthusiastic, festive atmosphere is anything to go by, SID has proven that such a design event is very much welcomed. In addition to increasing awareness and building connections among the various participating bodies, it was simply a democratic and accessible way of enjoying design. ♦ saturdayindesignsingapore.com



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NEW IN TOWN:
Visitors at the Pomelo showroom viewing a selection of Modernica lamps and Established & Sons furniture