

# DESIGNHEADS

JOHN  
MAYER

TEZO touchDown

RADICAL DESIGN CULTURE — SPRING 2024 — A PINK ESSAY PROJECT  
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# Letter From the Editor

It feels right that we're releasing our first physical iteration of *Designheads* about one year since the publication was born. Originally a humble profile series on the Pink Essay website, *Designheads* has grown into a full-fledged, truly alive thing. The magazine has introduced a different vision for writing about design, as we work to infuse a more liberated joy and curiosity into this world of design ... and not take it too seriously.

So, *what* is a designhead? For me, I feel most like a designhead when it's 1am and I'm scrolling through photos of chairs made from tennis balls, or pausing to examine the build of the seating at a chain restaurant. For you, it might mean being an obsessive collector of Alessi corkscrews, or your "Ugly Chairs" Are.na board. Whatever form your designhead-ing takes, we hope you'll find solace and a like-minded spirit in our work, here in print and beyond.  
To the designhead in all of us: this one's for you.

– David Eardley, Editor

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Did MSCHF team up with HGTV and move to Germany? Nope, that's just the wacky and amazing world of *FAN COLLECTIVE*: a group of 11 friends, artists, object-makers, and furniture designers. Their projects range from a DIY shelf – very easily put together by hammering a hole into your wall – to a 4 meter tall Megazord stacking stool, to a physical cata-log of logs.

Granting their verbalized wish to be locked in a house together (but in a twisted-Genie-kind-a-way), *Designheads* threw all 11 members of *FAN* into a Google Doc with few rules and no supervision. What emerged from the chaos is a wandering conversation about play and humor as an approach to design, collective imagination, and true friendship on display.

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# 11 Questions with Fan Collective

By: Juliyen Davis

Lukas Marstaller

How would you describe FAN Collective in 5 words or less?

Fan, Fen, Fon, Fun, Fam.

What do you hope Fan Collective's impact on design is?

FAN shows the potential of working together with different mindsets. In a way, it's anti singular style and signature designer and it exemplifies what a conversation in a design group – more or less without constraint – can lead to.



We play with the idea that you can recognize the style of an individual or that it becomes blurred in a collective work. We are always looking for new ways to work together or to react to each other. For example in our Stoooooooooooool exhibition in Zentrale, Karlsruhe, where we all designed a stool that can be stacked on another stool. 11 individual stools were created that together form a 4 meter high collective tower +1

One point about our collective work together is to do it out of a strong group mentality without any pressure, so if it will have an impact on design or not, it doesn't really matter. We're reflecting on the design discipline itself while taking things with humor and in a playful manner.

If you had to make a superlative for your collective members, what would it be?

Best Friends +1 +1

Most Like To Remain Highschool Sweethearts.

What's your version of FAN Collective's origin story?

11 friends who got to know each other during their studies and started working together in different constellations. ...One afternoon in a backyard in Karlsruhe.

The idea of FAN is to maintain and further develop a way of working and collaborating that originated in a particular place and time, but now after its members are no longer together in that place. Being able to improvise together, pass along ideas and sketches knowing that we share a roughly common view on things and yet have very different approaches to produce them in the end.

What's your favorite FAN Collective project so far? Why?

Romer.

Residence +1 +1. Because we had a whole residential building in Karlsruhe as an exhibition space and a wide range of perspectives.



The publication we want to produce in the near future. Playing around with 11 perspectives in a printed format could be interesting and challenging. +1

I liked the DIY-shelf we did a lot. I like that it was one piece in the end, instead of 11 different ones surrounding a theme. As a collective, our work is always in between those two extremes. I like the idea of individual voices becoming a choir. The project is also a little bit of a middle finger to common DIY projects. We thought it might be too heavy for the publisher, but we still did it as we believed it's a very honest way to design your surroundings. The fact that it ended up on the front page in the end shows that grit is key.

What's your dream collaboration for FAN Collective?

All together locked in a house on a hill for a week, or a month, with a reasonable budget +1

I'd love to design something for a football club.

FAN x [fill in the blank] ...Berlin metro  
FAN x [fill in the blank] ...Bauhaus (the hardware store, not the school). Yeah, that would be nice!!

Who is FAN Collective's work for?

First and foremost for ourselves, as we try to maintain a creative exchange through joint projects as a group. FAN feels like a loose extension of everyone's own practice.

Can you share a playlist or album that epitomizes FAN Collective?

No. Yes, Walls and Birds by Atlantic Bar. Yeah, true! Great album!

Die Nachos (mostly fan members).

How did the last FAN Collective project come together? How do they usually?

We were asked by 019, Ghent to contribute to a fire show. But we initiate projects ourselves most of the time. It is nice to be challenged by a certain external task or request that forces us to react to something though. +1



What are some of your biggest sources of inspiration or points of reference?

Inspiration often comes from within the group. When we are together and someone brings in a thought, we play around with it. But sometimes it's also the place itself. For example, at the Residence exhibition, some objects just emerged in reference to the old villa where we exhibited.

Within this setting everyone brings their own interests and references to the table.

Even if it may sound a bit clichéd, they are often everyday observations. For example, in a publication accompanying the Residence exhibition, we collected mobile phone images taken in Karlsruhe by all the FAN members, capturing odd situations, material combinations, accidental designs etc., which many times were the source or the starting point for work in the exhibition.

Collective work is really something that can inspire itself, by choosing or working on a topic, talking about it, collaborating, which is something you don't have working individually.

What's your weirdest or hottest take on design?

Destruction as design. We once hammered a hole in a wall for it to serve as a wall shelf.



INTERVIEW BY SAHIR AHMED  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CJ ASLAN

*And the  
multitalented  
artist-designer  
is building a world  
all her own.*

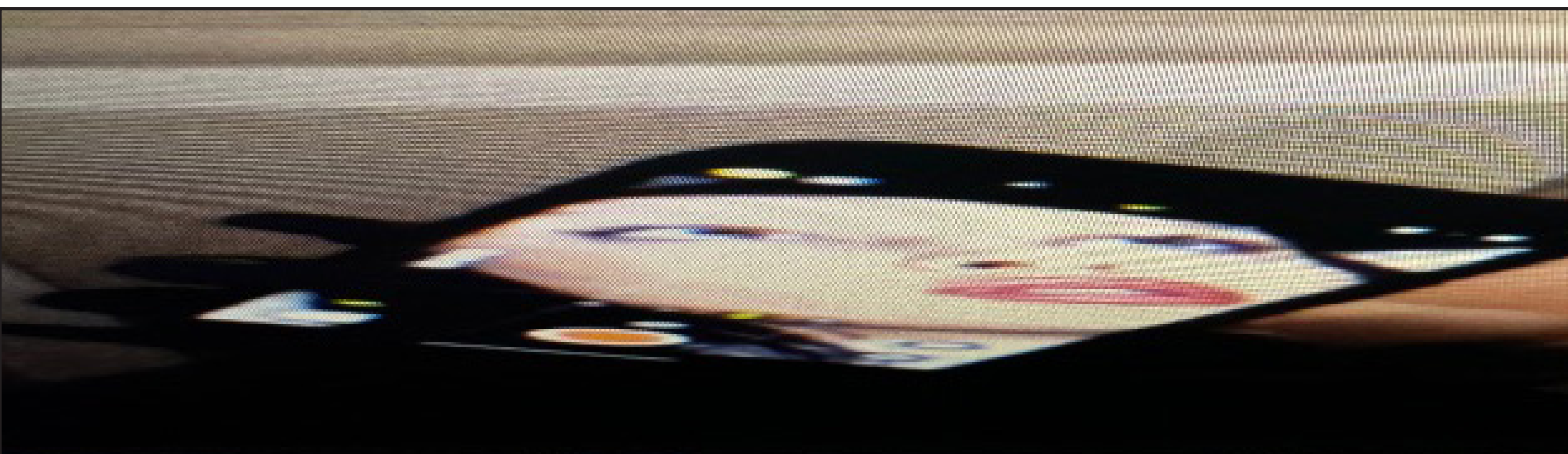
I met CJ Aslan unexpectedly, in passing at a magazine's fashion week party on the second floor of the Bowery Hotel. Waiting for a friend to use the bathroom, I went outside to bum a cigarette and there she was — said cigarette in hand — sitting on a bench. We broke the ice with the typical New York just isn't the same and fashion week just isn't that fun and how we even ended up there (it's what we 'do'). I told her that I like to tell stories. She told me that she "likes to create worlds." By that time my friend had returned

from the bathroom, so CJ and I bid the typical farewell — exchanging phone numbers and "text me, let's hang out."

I ran into her again in LA a month later at the Fonda. She'd been busy since I had last seen her: working on the shoes for London-based fashion designer Luis De Javier's Los Angeles fashion week debut, and launching her FW23 collection at H.Lorenzo.

ASLAN World first gained notoriety for its maximalist chain mail gloves. The brand also makes pierced chain mail bags, a chain mail tie, a pierced camo hat, hair clip rings, and the spiny TEETH FLATS. She often teams up with musicians: a 14k gold mask for Future, a custom glove for Maluma, and rings for Kali Uchis are just a few of her notable projects. ASLAN is CJ's imagination made tangible, a designhead pastiche of references ranging from her "tomboyish" upbringing adrenaline chasing in all its forms — from chopping down trees and axing them clean to skiing, surfing and anything having to do with cars — to the music she listens to and the sensorial experiences she's had.

Sometimes she's chasing a feeling, but she's always creating a world.



SA — What have you been up to since Halloween when I last saw you?

CJ ASLAN — So many things ... We had our launch event at H.Lorenzo. We're also working on the new collection — about to go to Paris to do sales for Men's Week. Honestly I can't wait for you guys to see the new pieces.

SA — That's exciting. I've been dying to speak with you about ASLAN World, so I'm glad we get to do this. I remember when we met in New York, you referred to yourself as someone who builds worlds. I'm curious to hear more about what you mean by that.

CJ — For me, it's so important to build a story, I feel like it makes it more interesting for the viewer and more sustainable. There's so many reasons why I like working around a narrative, but when it comes to the brand, we're navigating two worlds. The very niche art aesthetic that we're super attached to and the rappers, musicians and more commercial clients we work with. I want to keep a beautiful and intentional balance between the two. I say yes and no very strongly, I'm clear in what I am and what I'm not. That decision process is really at my core and how I've been able to build the brand around me. I consider myself an artist before anything else. Aligning that with ASLAN's trajectory is almost like working on a puzzle. It allows me to look at everything from a bird's eye view to ask questions like,

*What world does this idea exist in? What characters are in that world? Who is this for?*

Then I'll literally surround myself with that in my everyday life for however long I'm focusing on that body of work. When I'm over it, I'm over it and I'm kind of onto the next thing. I'll probably go through lots of iterations of ASLAN World.

SA — As an artist, do you feel as if you have to be stringent when it comes to execution?

CJ — I think that as long as whatever you do is intentional, it kind of doesn't matter. If your intention as an artist is to be strict with yourself, then set boundaries and stick to them. If you say that you want no boundaries and prefer to exist in chaos while creating for x amount of time, then stick to that. The place you create from can be distant from where somebody else would consider the world that they can live and operate in. Be aware of your decisions and try to do whatever it is, consciously.

SA — Have you always been so intentional? As a kid, did you always see a project through?

CJ — Yeah, I will always never not finish something, I feel like that's genuinely a part of me. As I've gotten older though, I've found

that as long as you're learning something from your experiences and you can take something away, that's also just as valuable.

*You can find knowledge in any crevice, opportunity, miss, win, whatever.*

It's nice to find satisfaction in seeing something through even if it doesn't come out how I originally wanted it to.

SA — Do you think it's possible for something that you create to ever be perfect?

CJ — That's really hard. I mean, I think everything is imperfect, but that's beautiful to

me. Being able to say, *Okay, I'm done with this*, is a really important lesson to learn. It's very human to look back at something and say, *I wish I had done it this way, or, I wish that I could change that*. I find it more valuable to just let things go and to stop when I know it's time to stop.

SA — ASLAN World feels almost dreamlike, so I wondered if your dreams show up in your creations or vice versa?

CJ — I swear to God... I have dreams of conversations that I have to have the next day. It's so dark! I'll literally have a dream about answering an email, and wake up the next day like, *Oh, wait, that didn't happen*, but it'll feel so real — it's so bizarre. I think that when I'm asleep, my head is in chaos, definitely in work mode. I find that my creative dreams exist more in daydreams. I love to work at night, so when I'm awake, by myself, just thinking, and looking at nothing is when I find that all of my ideas actually come to me.

SA — I was actually chatting with Josephine [Princess Gollum] the other day, who mentioned playing at your release at H.Lorenzo. She likened Los Angeles to a movie set where everyone's playing a part. Do you agree?

CJ — I do... but I'm from New York, so for me, so true. It's that whole bird's eye view concept. I feel like I see it across the board. I always say that in LA you don't actually meet someone until the third time you meet them, and I think that's why some people say that they don't like LA.

SA — Do you like LA?

CJ — I do like LA. Since I've moved here, I've met and worked with many amazing people, but I feel like it's really up to the individual to intentionally curate their experience here. I think you can exist in happiness anywhere in the world as long as you have thick skin and are comfortable with yourself. But we are all human and sometimes in a room full of people it can still feel like you're completely alone.

SA — Yeah, I agree, but are you ever really alone if you're with yourself? Do you feel as if this work connects you to your inner child?

CJ — I think so. There's a beautiful lesson in being your own best company, because at the end of the day no one is in your head but you. I try to remember often to just exist in play. I do find that in the past couple months I've been connecting with my inner child more, almost as a practice of letting go and just existing — doing fun little activities.

SA — Where do you find inspiration?

CJ — I honestly find that I pull a lot of inspiration from places that I've been — I'll be somewhere and a smell, sound, or taste will remind me of a past experience. I become obsessed with reimagining it, which will kickstart the process of developing a world. I usually work in silence or have one song on repeat to score the mood for the day. Otherwise I'm always researching: films, documentaries, scores, video games.

SA — What inspired you growing up?

CJ — I also grew up pretty tomboy-ish — skiing, surfing, chopping down trees — obsessed with anything having to do with adrenaline, so I've drawn a lot of inspiration from the clothing culture in that niche. We love an exaggerated silhouette.

SA — How did you come up with the spiked ballet flats?

CJ — I was inspired by sea urchins, and this tree behind my house that has these cra-

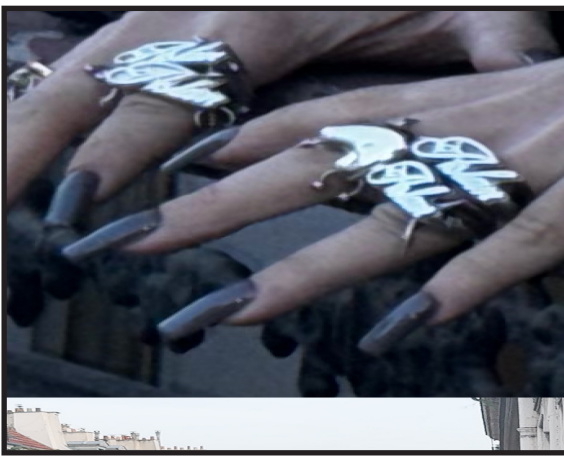
zy spikes to defend itself from birds and predators.

SA — I'd never guess that.

CJ — I love that it makes people dig a little bit. At the end of the day,

*I don't feel that art is about you as the maker, it has to evoke something for the viewer, propose a question.*

To me, the process is always more important than the finished piece. A lot of people say that ASLAN World is punk, or this, or that, and it's not at all to me, and that's fine. I just don't see it as committed to any one identity.



SA — It does tell a story though. Almost how I love seeing older people that are so intentional about what they wear, from the color of their scarf or socks to the material of their sweater or coat. It's so obvious what it means to them as opposed to how easily younger generations cycle through trends now.

CJ —

*PURITY!*

*I love that there's no rules to them. Our generation loves to say that there's no rules, but God, there's so many damn rules.*

I don't know what anyone's talking about these days. I do love seeing true personal style though. I might think what someone's wearing is absolutely hideous, but it's not for anyone else: it's just how the person wants to exist in the world and that's great.

SA — Do you feel like you have more of an advantage starting ASLAN World now than a time before social media?

CJ — It's so cool that I can so easily find somebody on the internet that's halfway across the world that I would want to collaborate with, which we could never have done before. I learned a lot through Instagram, but I also existed without it for such a long time, so it's overwhelming to me that so much of this younger generation is just looking at their phones.

SA — What did you have to figure out first?

CJ — Figuring out production was so difficult. I actually made all of the pieces from our first collection completely by hand by myself, crashing between two friends' houses in LA, living out of a suitcase. How to scale a business where I could decrease labor time and actually make a profit was a new beast for me. I used to work in creative direction in the music industry

doing live concerts, visual albums. Before that, I was a studio artist — I didn't come from a fashion house or work in this industry "proper" before this. I taught myself as quickly as I could and started with no specific connections. I would walk around the jewelry district



and buy the wholesaler gold catalogs — eavesdrop on inside gem deals on the first floor of Hill St with a notepad and pen.

SA — What was the first thing you made?

CJ — It was actually a film that I wrote and directed during the pandemic. All of the costumes became the first collection.

SA — So you didn't even start out wanting to design wearables or jewelry? Funny how that happens.

CJ — I always knew that I wanted to take the things that were developing in my mind and produce them in real life, which is why I made the film. It continues to be the starting point for everything we're working on now. That was chapter one. Now I'm looking at everything and it's still just chapters of this film to me, trying to figure out where they're going to go next.

SA — How is it working with so many rappers and musicians as a female designer — it's still such a male-dominated industry.

CJ — I've definitely found myself in spaces that were challenging to navigate, but it's honestly been really cool. I definitely will shut down any environment I don't feel is respectful. So with curation I find I've built such honest and beautiful work relationships, which is sick because that's obviously not always how the world is to women at all. I also have been told by most people that they would never guess it was a woman behind the brand before meeting me or seeing a photo. They think I'm a dude because of the context of the brand and my email signature being "CJ". I wasn't face fronting until recently on social media in general. I'll leave you also with that.

SA — Do you feel invisible then, in a sense? As if your brand can speak for itself?

CJ — I wanted it to be just that at first. Really anonymous. No face and no home, which leaves room for the imagination. Like-minded artists are also important to me. I try to be intentional.

SA — What artists have you worked with that you feel align most with the ASLAN World brand identity?

CJ — KORN & Playboi Carti.

SA — How was breaking into the jewelry industry?

CJ — I had to learn to let go of all ego and match energy when entering specific rooms where people may try to diminish you.

*Be patient, wait your turn, and leave the table shocked by the delivery of knowledge you left them with.*

SA — Yeah, leave them obsessed with the idea of working with you.

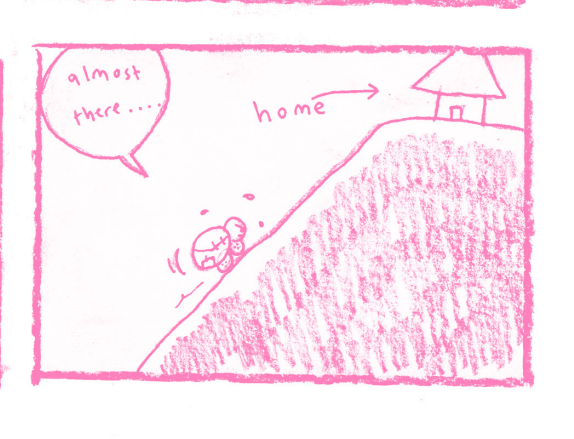
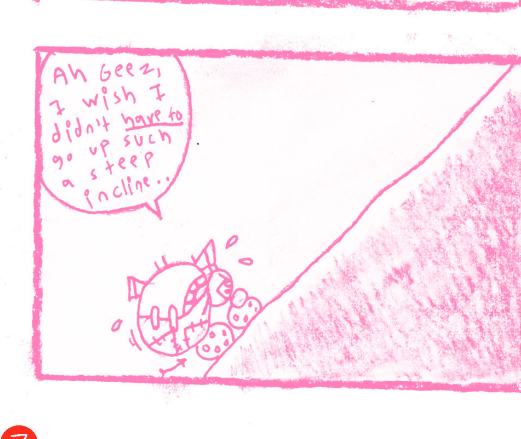
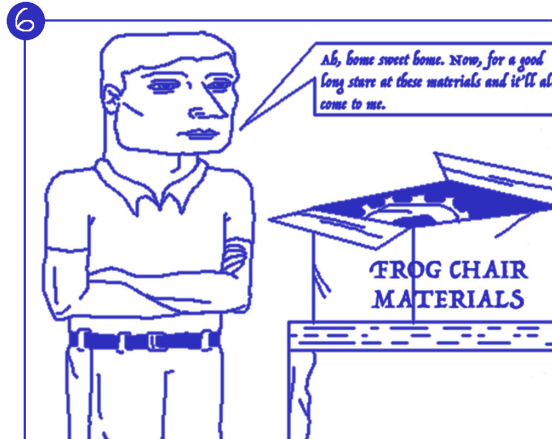
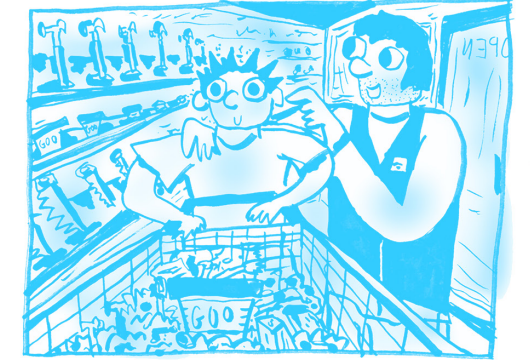
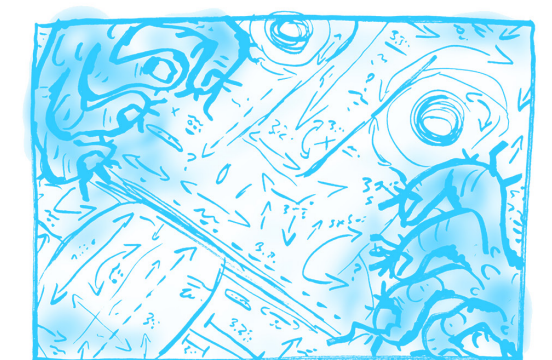
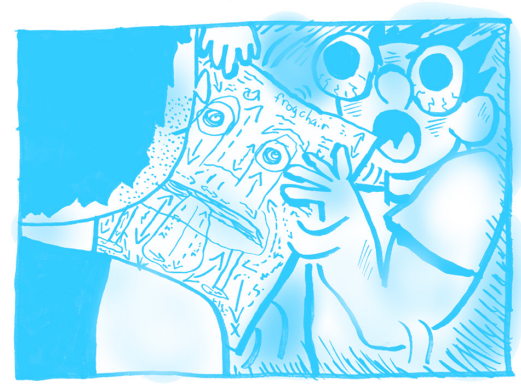
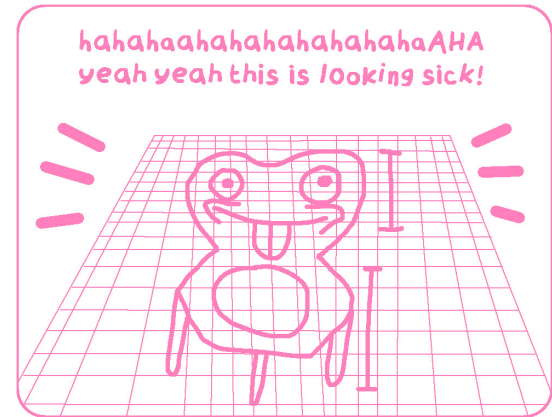
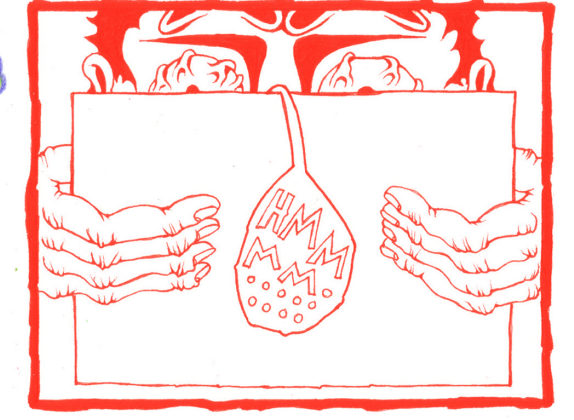
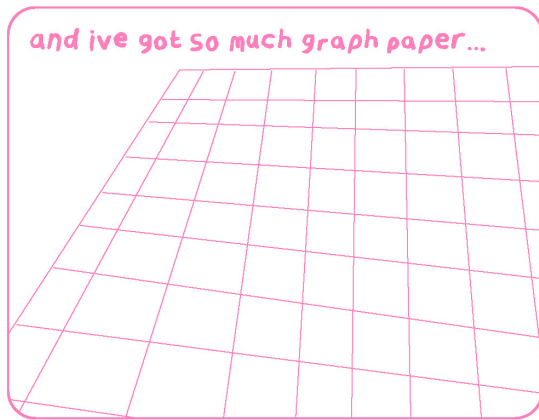
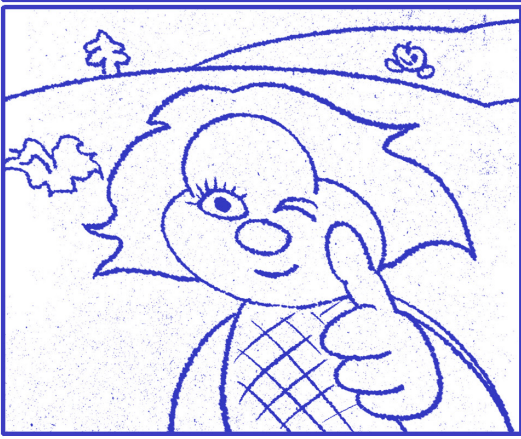
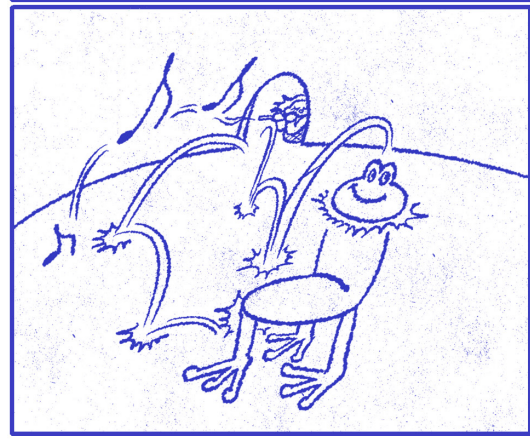
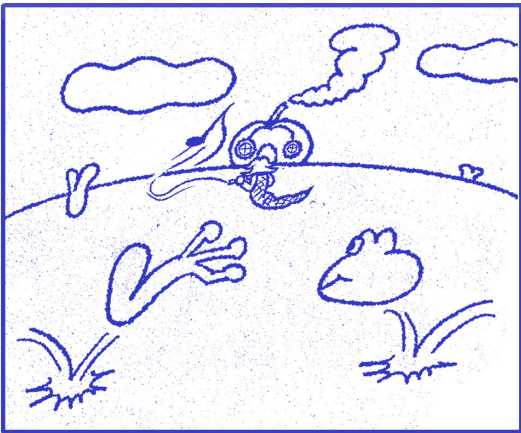
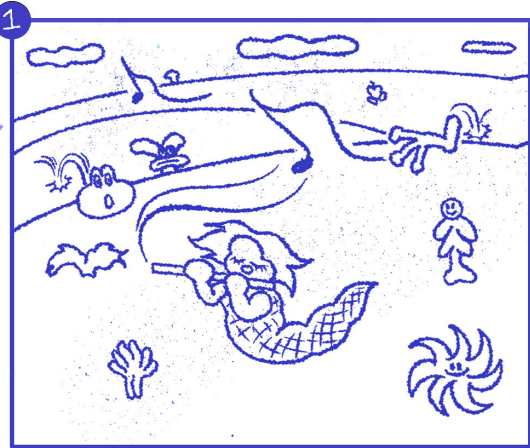
CJ — You have to knock on a lot of doors before someone answers. Even with the TEETH FLATS, no factory called me back. I remember finally one day I just showed up at a factory with a sample I made by hand, with no appointment, waited hours until they finished their actual scheduled meetings for the day and finessed someone to give me some time to chat. First round they weren't sold but I kept coming back, and eventually from not taking no for an answer, I swooned them over and we're busting out some amazing shoes now.

SA — What's the greatest lesson you've learned?

CJ — Become a sponge, absorb and learn from everything, good or bad. Everything's just a thing that's happening to you right now.



# 7 EASY STEPS TO MAKING THE ... Frog! chair!



- CREDITS**
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# Teezo

# TOUCHDOWN

TRAVIS  
BY: M

Talking with Teezo Touchdown takes time. He has a superpower way of **slowing things down** and cutting them into something deep. He often drifts introspectively in and out of memories, especially when we talk about home. And just as you would expect from exploring his increasingly diverse catalog of bops, bangers, and smooth jams, my man drops bars.

Throughout our 30-minute call, Teezo reminds us that, as **"artists,"** we are all way more alike than we think. For Teezo, **nothing is impossible** and everything is doable – if you **"DIWYF"** (Do It With Your Friends).

Perhaps it's the Texan in me that gets so hype when an artist shouts out their upbringing as much as Teezo does. Throughout our talk, it's clear he prioritizes **home, family, and friends** above all else. Teezo is a man of values, and has a sincere passion to do right by those who paved the way for him to flourish: his approach to **limitless** self-expression seems rooted in a solid foundation of **love** and friendship.

One of the greatest cultural revelations of the past decade from my perspective has been the global rise of the **multi-disciplinary** artist. Now more than ever, it is understood that one's creativity can be applied to any discipline, at any point in your career. Not only do we celebrate this, we've come to almost expect it from our champions.

Teezo Touchdown is one of these artists, and while his career in the mainstream public eye is only still budding, it's clear to all who have followed his rise since the beginning that his star has a **bright future**.

## So what does design have to do with it



I believe, as designers, we have **so much to gain** from thinking like music artists, especially now as furniture design continues to grow in its influence on the culture: we must approach our **craft** with the same **genre-bending** flexibility that musicians explore in their own identity.

I first met Teezo in 2021 when he arrived at my studio in the LES dressed as a construction worker reminiscent of the Village People. As Texas boys, Teezo and I share a mutual friend in Houston — **Josh Allen**, a fashion designer and artist who is no stranger to the multi-hyphenate creative landscape, whose family is from Beaumont Texas, the same town as Teezo, and dropped a clothing collection under the name of that same town. Since then, Josh and Teezo have formed a deep friendship built on mutual respect for putting on for their city.

When the boys pulled up, Teezo immediately gravitated to my Pillow Stool, a fully upholstered leather stool I designed with a big Cuban link chain that you can "wear" like a bag: "Oh shiiiiittt - this is fire." It makes sense that Teezo would respond to such a piece that intersects fashion and furniture – we found ourselves deep in conversation around our take on intersectionality in art and design, passing around a blunt and the aux cord as we each took turns playing everything from 90s hip hop to emo and indie rock hits.

Even then, it was **clear** that Teezo was transcending into superstar status, but at that moment the **3** of us were just Texas kids, bright eyed and thankful.

Three years later, Teezo's just finished touring with **Travis Scott** — arguably one of the biggest artists in the world — and has been featured on nearly every massive record album in hip hop in the last year. Now he's on the cover of **Rolling Stone** and is preparing for own **first world tour** as one of the most celebrated new artists in the game. And yet still here he is, **humble and kind**, on Google Meets with ya boy for the first print issue of **Designheads**.

WHEN WE STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE CREATIVE ARTS, THERE ARE CERTAIN PATTERNS WE SEE REPEATED - A FORMULA IF YOU WILL THIS IS THE SAME WHETHER IN HIP HOP OR CLOTHING DESIGN OR ARCHITECTURE WE ALL TAP INTO OUR SURROUNDINGS, ANALYZE THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT BUILT UPON THE PAST, AND THROUGH DEEP REFLECTION AND EXPLORATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES WE SHAPE OUR FUTURE SOMETIMES OUR WORK INNOVATES ON THE IDEAS OF OUR PEERS, AND SOMETIMES IT IS A REJECTION OF THE STATUS QUO, BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT IT'S A COMBINATION OF BOTH THAT SHIFTS THE PARADIGM IT IS MY HOPE THAT, INSPIRED BY THIS INTERVIEW, A YOUNG DESIGNER WILL DO JUST THAT

- ~~GUARO~~ GUARO

COVER BY JUSTIN MARIANO

# DOWN Matt Recina Studio of GUARO

**Matt**

I don't know if you can see me, but I got my Beaumont hoodie on right now.

**Teezo**

Whoa! Josh Allen is in the building with us.

**Matt**

You already know. I don't know if you remember, but we met a couple of years ago — Josh brought you to my studio in New York. We checked out some furniture ...

**Teezo**

Yeah! The seat bag, of course.

**Matt**

Full circle moment. You know, I work a lot in the design industry — curating design shows in New York — as well as my own design practice. I'm super inspired by music and DIY culture ... **connecting different subcultures**. Making design more accessible, so it's just as cool as punk or hip hop or streetwear. I want design to have that same place among these subcultures, you know, which is why it's so great to interview you.

**Teezo**

Wow, this is amazing. What a **full circle moment** — I'm so honored. Thank you Matt, for real.

**Matt**

I mean, the honor's all mine dude. And you know, you're from Texas. And I'm from Dallas. So Texas boys in the house. You know, we already talked about Beaumont — home of the brave.

What is home to you?

**Teezo**

Man, you know, **I miss it**. I miss it so, so much. It's a place I go to **recharge**. It's a place that I enjoy seeing grow — grow and expand. I think that's where I'm at right now in my journey. You know, I always mentioned Beaumont in interviews — it's all about just showing my love to that town. And just pulling back the layers of experiences that I had from that place.

I think it would probably be downtown [Beaumont]. Downtown was always this place — when your parents had to go do business or whatever, or if you ever got a speeding ticket, you had to go downtown. Seeing the architecture there [back] then, you were seeing it decay ... [and] I'm seeing it decay even more now. I feel like later in my life, I really started to **appreciate** the abandoned buildings. When I'm back at home, I still walk around downtown. It's like a ghost town to everyone else, but I'm looking at



Photography by Alondra Buccio

it with new eyes — like looking at an abandoned Hollywood set.

...I think the reason I like abandoned buildings and stuff like that is because it's not being used. [It] really sticks out as something that I can use — something that's forgotten about, something that they're probably trying to knock down. The place where I shot my music video for "Keep It Professional" is no longer there. A lot of artists used that spot as a place to shoot videos, but the city was like, "Alright, let's knock this [down]."

**Matt**

So there's that feeling of preservation that you have with those spaces in your city. When something doesn't work, are you inspired to fix it?

**Teezo**

Absolutely. I was told at a very young age, "There's more than one way to ..." — I changed the saying, because the old saying is, "There's more than one way to skin a cat." Now I say, "There's more than one way to feed a cat." And by that, I mean I get excited trying to find another way of making something happen. I like when my friends come to me with problems.

**Matt**

Handyman.

**Teezo**

Facts.

**Matt**

"Mr. Handyman." That whole video and set was really inspiring to me as a designer, seeing you with the tool belt, about to make some shit. That was fire.

Tell me a bit about the spirit of DIY. How important is that to you?

**Teezo**

I look at it more like "DIWYF." Not, "Do it yourself" — more like, "Do it with your friends." That banter that you have with your friends, when you all get to meet up and talk about the day you had. I think the reason that the reason [people] thrive so much in art ... all goes back to community. I feel like if you're doing it by yourself ... it's pretty sad, just speaking from experience, because I know how lonely you can get. Do it with your friends — I think a lot of good comes from that.

**Matt**

I love that DIWYF versus DIY. There's a whole TED talk you could do on that.

So — are you a designhead?

**Teezo**

You know, we're planning our first headlining tour and David Landry, who's from Houston, is building my first [tour set]. When I had my spot in Houston, [I had] one of his pieces as my work desk. That was kind of my introduction into design: having a homie who's very hands on. A homie I can call and say, "Alright, it's time for it to go into the tour. Can you build this for me? Or, "Can you draw this out for us?" I think my love for design — like I say, "do it with your friends" — comes from knowing a friend who's real life hands-on like that.

I used to go to his garage while he was working on someone else's project ... and [see] him be so excited about using his hands and building things.

But I have to go back to my dad, because he literally built my studio. He always says, "What you do with music is how I am with my hands." And he's absolutely that. I've seen him build wings to the house. I've seen him build a carport...

**Matt**

That's real — when you're growing up, seeing somebody solve problems. Like, "Alright, something's not working in the house or we want something different in the house." And seeing somebody go buy the materials, bring it to the house, make a plan, and execute — that's a lesson ... observing that is so powerful.

**Teezo**

I used to really dread going to home improvement stores with him. Like, "Bro — this is just so boring." Now I'm there like every weekend — it's so funny.

**Matt**

Now you got to get your Home Depot sponsorship.

**Teezo**

[Laughs] Not yet.

**Matt**

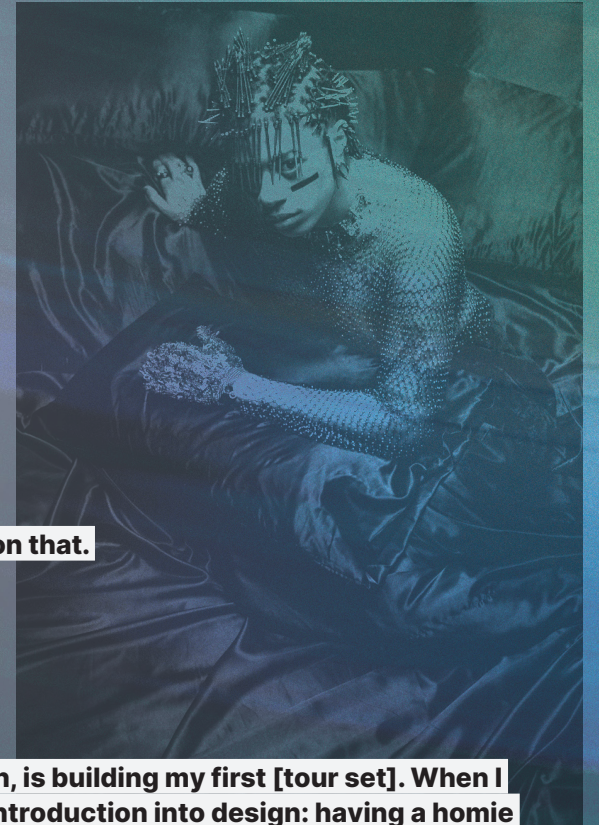
Or maybe Lowe's.

Virgil [Ablon] often talked about cheat codes — "defining your signature" was one of these main cheat codes. He described how, basically, if you find your signature, you get a cheat code to go to the next level. What's your signature?

**Teezo**

I think my signature is being a professional fan: looking at my landscape and bringing something into the world that I would want to see [myself]. That's why — even when it comes down to a tour announcement — I go the extra mile, because ... I would want to see it if I was a fan of Teezo Touchdown. I think my signature is thinking like a fan and delivering like a professional.

Photography by Renae "IIRONIC" Wootson



**Matt** Many musicians these days are really exploring different mediums and industries outside of their expertise. Why do you think that's so important for an artist?

**Teezo** Well, I can speak for me — sometimes it comes from a love of different mediums. But sometimes, if I'm having writer's block or something, then I can lean on my visual art, like creating cover art — or something [else] like that. Right now [that's] script writing. It's an outlet to express myself. And I use that sometimes like a therapy — if one thing isn't working, I'm blessed and fortunate enough to have another thing that I can explore, and find another way to express myself. So I think, for me, it's more of a "Yes, it's fun," but also it kind of keeps me sane — keeps me busy, you know?

**Matt** Now that you're in a position and growing even more every day into a position to bridge different industries and cultures, where do you plan to go outside of music?

**Teezo** I mean, I'm sitting here with a script in front of me. I love comedy, I love screenplays, I love acting — I love the back of the house of those things. So I think I'm just gonna just keep expanding on those things.

**Matt** 100%. You've been interdisciplinary since the beginning.

Alright, a different question: house in the hills or loft in the city?

**Teezo** Me being a country boy, I got to get this city out of my system. [Growing up], we had downtown Beaumont, which was pretty abandoned. And then the next best thing was Houston, you know? For us country folk, a weekend in Houston [was] like going to LA or New York. So ... I definitely want to get that Manhattan, middle-of-the-madness out of my system. And then, after that, I'll go somewhere in the country in Texas and call it a day.

**Matt** Get you the ranch.

**Teezo** Exactly.

**Matt** Loft in the city it is. Have you thought about how you're going to design your loft?

**Teezo** No — I've been I haven't had the privilege [yet]. I've been bouncing around, been moving since 2019. So I've just been taking notes on what I like: I love space, I love high ceilings — I love where lights are going — this little circle in the ceiling now. Right now I'm going around the world, living different experiences, and just trying to see what I like. So I think I'm trying to figure out what that is.

And I don't want it to be [about] a spotlight, like "Oh, this is cool because I want to post it." I want to make this world comfortable — like, "This is what I dreamed of." Even on the last tour, we were like, "How are we going to put a bedroom on stage?" ... I get to talk to interior designers and actually express what I'm expressing to you. I never really had a spot that I could furnish, from the ground up. So, [I'm] just doing my research, seeing stuff that I like.

**Matt** How do you foster space for creation? What do you need around you to be most creative?

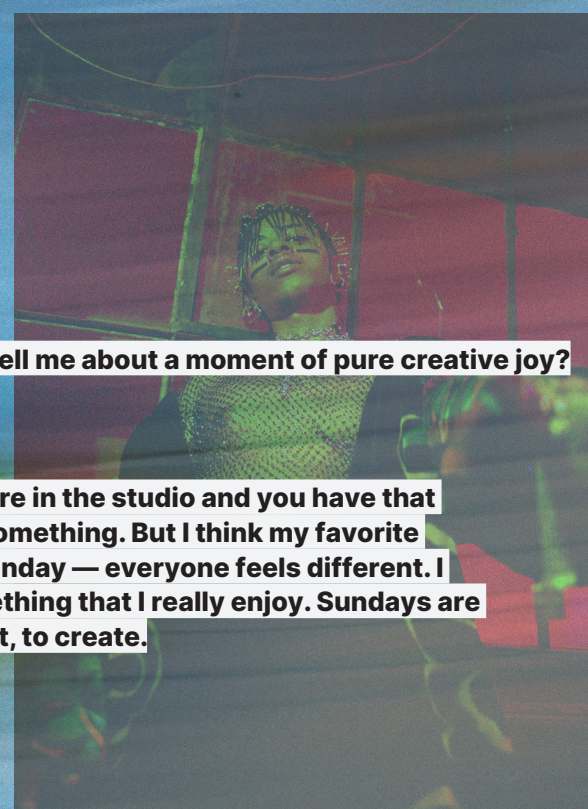
**Teezo** At this point, I need a neutral zone. I like going to studios, because it's a neutral zone. We know where the kitchen is, we know where the restroom is. That seems to be working for me. I can't record a hotel or a house with other people in it, because I feel like people are like, cup-to-the-wall, trying to hear what I'm thinking or whatever — it's so nerve-wracking. And I'm afraid of a noise complaint. So I really just dig studios — it's a designated place where I can come and be loud. But I think once I get my own spot and there's no neighbors or whatever, and it's soundproof, then I'll be able to rock out and record anywhere.

**Matt** Can you tell me about a moment of pure creative joy?

**Teezo** That happens every time we're brainstorming or are in the studio and you have that moment when the room smiles or the room gets something. But I think my favorite is just creating on Sundays. Something about a Sunday — everyone feels different. I [want to be] there on a video set or studio or something that I really enjoy. Sundays are my favorite day of the week — I'm just my happiest, to create.

**Matt** I feel that. Dude, thank you so much. I'm so honored to have gotten to spend a few minutes here with you, talking about art and design and your connection to it. This was sick. When you get that loft and need some furniture, you already know how to come to! [laughs]

**Teezo** Thank you so much for this time, Matt. See you soon and congrats on all of this man. I'm truly honored and thankful.



Photography by YT PRESS

# (Op-Ed) Wot Do U Call It? by Ayo Fagbemi

There is something in the air, or should I say in the chairs - regarding the styles and references emerging from object and furniture designers of the African diaspora. There's a distinct thread that pins them together, and you can see it weaving through the private gallery viewings, the Instagram comments, and the panel conversations, yet we don't have a name for it.

Do we need one?

I run a monthly games night called "Dey Play" where we play Dominoes and a West African strategy game called Ayo (I swear I'm not named after it). Some Ghanaians call it Oware. For the first night, we hosted a panel featuring two African diaspora designers: Mac Collins, whose piece based on one of those classic games, dominoes, is considered a standout at the Venice Biennale, and Giles Tettey Nartey, one of the most exciting designers and researchers at the moment, whose communal bench, 'Interplay', doubles up as a board for 'Oware' - abeg, it's the last time I call it this.

I hosted the panel with my good friend, photographer and curator Christian Cassiel, who runs an African archive of books and objects called Seed. It came together as we all felt like we were pulling ideas from different wells using the same technique and pouring this into our work. Moments of convergence in design like this make me reflect on how time will judge this period - how we will talk about it and describe it.

It certainly helps a scene's growth to have a name. If you are from the UK, you may have caught the easter egg in this article's title. It's from the 2004 song "Wot Do U Call It?" by Wiley, released by XL Recordings, in which the Godfather of Grime parodies journalists trying to fit his style of music into pre-existing boxes such as Garage, Urban or two-step, and instead lays out a vision for a new generation of sound from London. In 2019, Stormzy stated at Glastonbury's - the most prominent musical stage in the UK - that this new definition, Grime, allowed him to step on the shoulders of giants.



More recently, labeling has helped our musical cousins across the globe in the Alté scene, a term used by TeeZee to describe "alternative music" by a new generation of stylistic kids in Nigeria. The term was first heard in Boj's 2014 song "Paper" and is now eligible to enter Grammy categories. But, in this case, is recognition all a name brings?

Similar to music, does this new crop of designers need a catch-all term made suitable for us by - let's be honest - outsider journalists or curators? Another writer, Shawn Adams, who I have a lot of respect for, says no. "Black designers may be called that term and not simply celebrated as good designers," he says, which considers the historical precedent set by catch-all terms having been used as derogatory claims against talented individuals. Like the term "rapper" being used to describe a musician - a name that unites us despite others using it to tear us down.



Speaking to Larry Tchogninou about how he sees this moment - he says, "I belong to the art movement of my time", and "it is more of a historian's job to describe what artistic movement we are a part of right now." He talks about a desire in his process to add a couple of African references to his work, not all the time, but sometimes. But, how does it shape a designer's identity to know that they are contributing to a particular canon of design history? While the design movements that spoke to generations all eventually became heralded, named, and put in textbooks, how do we ensure that the history reflects us appropriately years later? What will they remember about our work? Holly Rollins, with her seminal work Aura, used her piece to aid the mental wellness of the black community during the COVID-19 pandemic amidst the George Floyd protests. It is emblematic of turning pain into purpose to uplift a community.

This idea is the crux of the argument in this piece - the link between identity and identifying yourself in what is out there in the world. Grime gave me a space to explore my identity, and Alté gave me a Nigeria I could see myself in. Grace Wales Bonner, who understands this concept clearer than I ever could, works to present the lineage of the Afro-Atlantic. She refers to her work as Afro-Futurism in a myriad of styles, tying our stories together with a thread that changes the way we see ourselves and the position in which our stories are heralded in the movement and hierarchy of art within our minds, not just the collective conscious of the industry.

So, like Wiley, I speak to you, the reader, the writer, the industry, the scene, the designhead, the academic:

Wot do u call it?

## (Classifieds)

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**ISO Broken Furniture with a story.**  
Hi people, I repair broken stuff. By repair, I mean "breathe new life into." By broken, that's for you to define. My repairs rely on an object's hi(story) and interviews to inform material and aesthetic decisions. Hit me up!  
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Valentine's Day was a few weeks ago. But similar to birthdays, you don't need predetermined days to show your loved one how you feel. Get the AMORE key and let someone special know that they hold the key to your heart. For enquiries DMs to @fabianmaierbode or @josuarappt L.O.V.E.

Did you know a chair has only eleven lines? See why at @ssittingalone.

Hi I'm Teresa I'm in my last semester at Parsons for product design. I like metal, I like furniture, I like jewelry, and I like you... please hire me ... I'm in ny... employment is much desirable just like you~ -@rupurtons

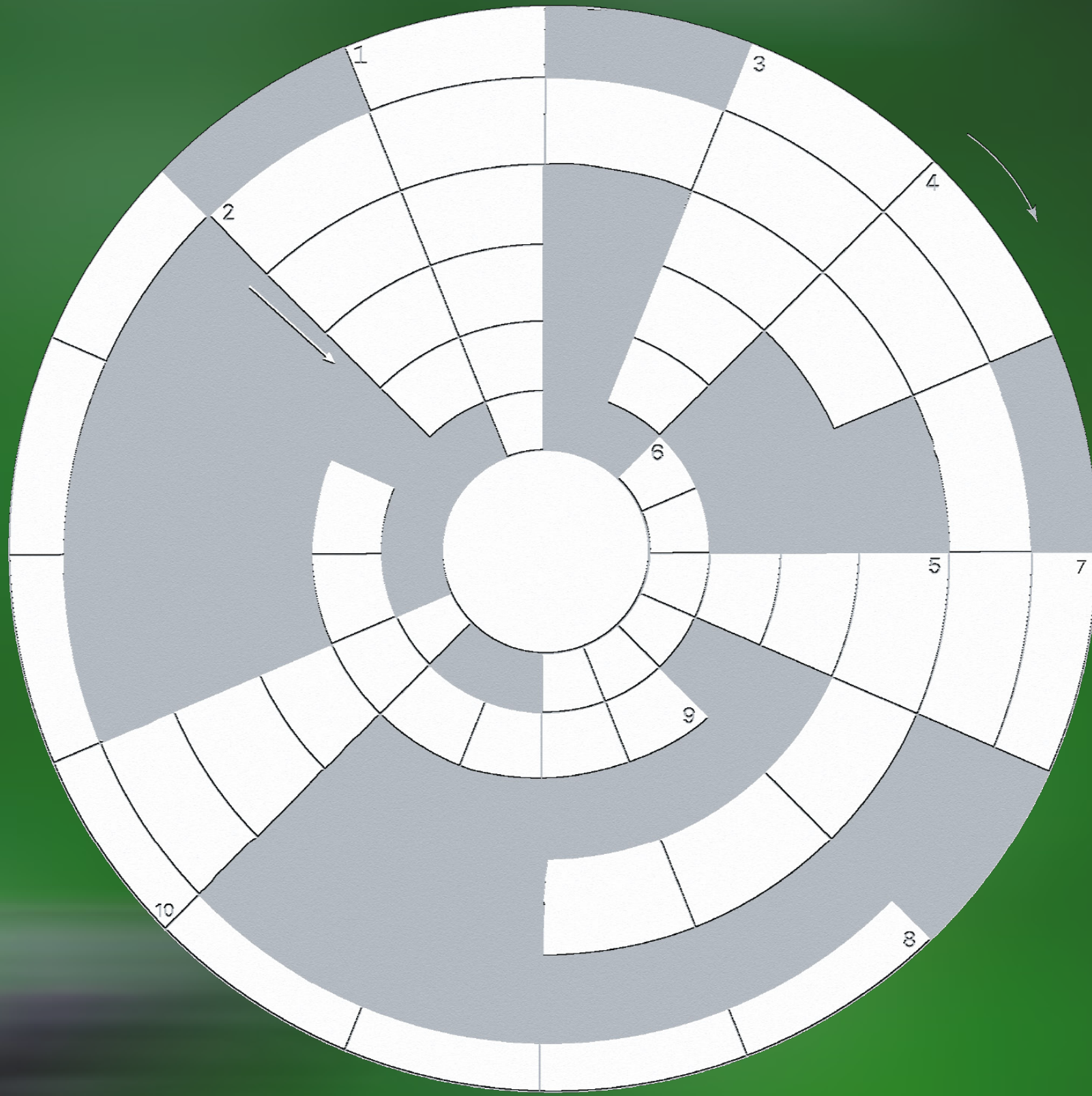
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-@norbeister

# (Crossword)



## DOWN

- 1. HE DIDN'T DESIGN KIM K'S TABLE AND CHAIRS, TO THOSE WHO KNEW HIM
- 2. BIRD'S ABODE, OR Y2K-ERA INTERIORS MAGAZINE
- 3. A BLOSSOM, OR THE IKEA TABLE STYLE YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM
- 4. ABOUT 75 YEARS AGO, STYLISTICALLY
- 7. THE E IN E-1027
- 10. HARSH-ITECTURE, MINUS THE SUFFIX

## CLOCKWISE

- 2. NO GOOD, COLLOQUIALLY AND WITH AN H -- OR FAMOUS FOR AKARI LAMPS
- 5. WOOLY BABY, OR SURNAME OF INFLUENTIAL CHAIR-MASTER
- 6. A EVENT REMIXED, OR PARTIAL NAME OF #9'S STYLISH COLLABORATOR
- 8. A \$3.50 CHAIR, MORE OR LESS
- 9. OUR FAVORITE RESINOUS MAESTRO, ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS

ANSWERS AVAILABLE AT [PINKESSAY.SPACE](http://PINKESSAY.SPACE)

# (The Designheads Quiz)

The sexiest quality I look for in a chair:

- I'm feeling inspired on:
- (a) tumblr
  - (b) are.na
  - (c) instagram
  - (d) real life

The last interesting thing I saw online:

The ugliest design I've ever seen is:

I can't stand this trend:

- My design style is:
- (a) chaotic
  - (b) perfectionist
  - (c) esoteric
  - (d) mysterious

- Life's too short to:
- (a) not #stoop
  - (b) be a minimalist
  - (c) wear all black
  - (d) buy fake Donald Judd

I'm a designhead:

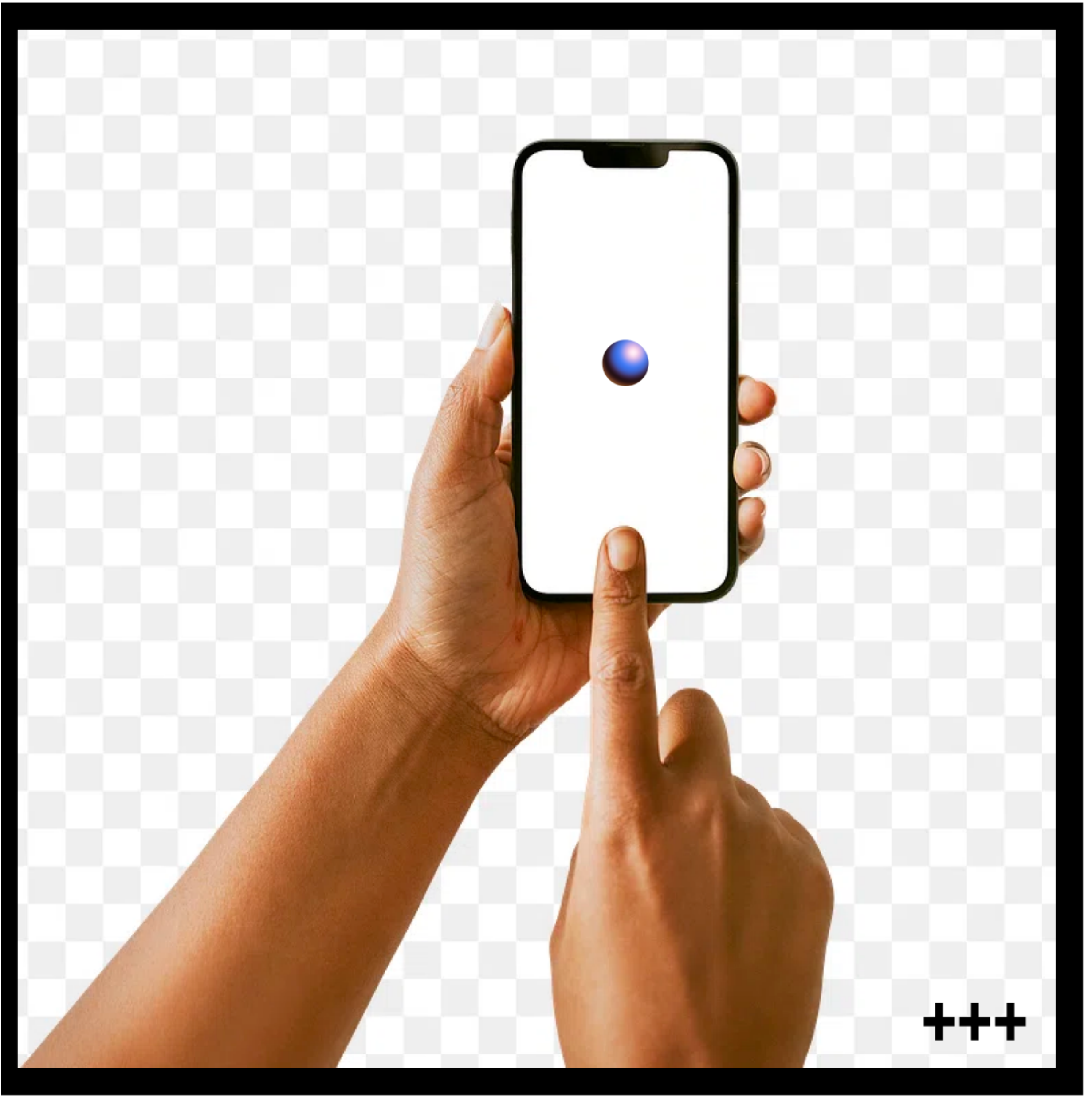
- (a) yes
- (b) yes

Name/IG:

I live in:

The chair I dreamed of last night looked like this

Fill it out + Share + Tag @pinkessay



???



[zora.co](https://zora.co)

!!!



**IMAGINE**



**HERE**



/di'zæn hed / — noun: a person with a strong affinity for design culture

scan for more

ARENA

Matan\_... — Edited  
Andale Mono Regular

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? To me, a designhead is someone who is curious about the world around them and pulls different influences and inspirations to create their own world. In this sense, I feel as though I am.

A design object you can't stand the sight of: Philippe Starck Lemon Squeezer

What does it mean to "design the future"? To learn from the past. I've always compared my current work to my past work. Making sure there is a sense of progression. Progression can only occur if you're learning from past mistakes and successes. So, I'm always in this state of reflection, while still looking ahead.

Words to live by: There's a Cantonese saying my Mum would always say — it translates to "the sky has eyes." I apply this to my practice, in that the amount of energy and effort I put into my work eventually all comes back around, because the universe is always looking.

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

Song: "Silver Morning" by Brian Eno

Natural Material: Metal and cotton.

Synthetic Material: Pigment and resin.

What's one design object that has your same energy? Would have to say something I've designed, since it's the best reflection of who I am. Specifically my Incense Holder, with an incense stick burning.

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: Frank Ocean.

Teah\_designhead  
Andale Mono Regular 10

Are you a designhead? What does that mean to you? Fortunately and unfortunately, yes. I'm fascinated by designed objects, designed spaces, designed experiences ... and hold the belief that, regardless of intent or awareness, everything is somehow designed. Being a designhead, to me, simply means being a student of our constructed environment. Both eyes open, a running list of questions, and an active interest in answering them. Unfortunately these inquiries can rapidly overtake one's life, hard drive, and Are.na.

The last thing you made: A syllabus for my course at Parsons. 'Racism, Classism, & the Constructed Environment.'

A design object you love: More of a category, but I love an ornate ceiling medallion.

What does it mean to "design the future"? Know the past, critique it, and experiment.

Words to live by: "Liberation is a spatial practice." - Mario Gooden in 'Dark Space, p21. Additionally, the entirety of 'Black Women Writers at Work' by Claudia Tate

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

\*Song: "A Long Walk" by Jill Scott

\*Color: Burnt Sienna

\*Texture: Zellige tiles

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: My future self, for feedback! (This is a very Leo answer, I imagine)

ro\_designhead — Edited  
Andale Mono Regular 10

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? Totally. It means that I see design everywhere I go and can't stop thinking about the possibilities that surround every type of matter, from the food I'm eating to the chair I'm sitting on. We are immersed in a constant DIY exercise of configuration of the spaces, cities, houses, parks, countries, etc. we are in, through artifacts we make, and that is very exciting and inspiring.

The last thing you made: a tape dispenser

The next thing you want to make: a big format furniture collection

A design object you love: I love Enzo Mari's Timor perpetual calendar and little sugar mouse design by Alexander Girard for La Fonda del Sol equally. Instead of offering the regular sugar cubes to the guests, Girard thought about making them into a little sugar mouse, and that's a beautiful little detail for the client experience, and also ephemeral.

A design object you can't stand the sight of: guns, even the fake or toy ones

What does it mean to "design the future"? For me, it means to design intentionally, thinking about our outputs in a more respectful and ethical way. Meaning that there's so much stuff out there, so it's important to be conscious that the artifacts we're creating answer to purer and more profound needs than a mere superficial goal. Design for the future means having a critical and truthful relationship with your ideas.

Words to live by: "Sin prisa, pero sin pausa" — (slowly but surely).

Your aesthetic approach embodied as ...

Song: "No Soy de Aquí Ni Soy de Allá" by Chavela Vargas

Color: every color

Texture: marshmallow or jello texture

Natural Material: wood or palm leaves

Synthetic Material: latex, silicone or industrial raffia

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: Personally would love to show my recent work to my grandparents from my dad's side of the family, who I love but I lost not long ago. I think they would be very excited by it. And thinking about someone famous, probably Alexander Girard who's one of my favorite designers and is in my opinion one of the best creators of all time.

Ju Young Kim



Age: 32  
Location: Munich / Seoul  
Sign: Libra  
IG: @yuyoungkim

Takumi Mitori; Matsumoto Barboosa



Age: 28  
Location: Mexico City  
Sign: I'm a fucking Libra, Party!  
IG: @tsm

Nik Bente/



Age: 30  
Location: New York  
Sign: Sagittarius  
IG: @hikbentelstudio

Rodrigo Méndez



Age: 25  
Location: Mexico City  
Sign: Gemini  
IG: @rodrigo\_mendez

# DESIGNHEAD

**Nik\_designhead** — Edited

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? Yes, absolutely! Being fully immersed in the design process. The making, the shipping, the packaging, the experience, the using, the disposing – of the objects all around us.

The next thing you want to make: I would love to make a birdhouse. But I really want to make a birdhouse out of unique materials. Maybe out of steel? Would birds like that? Would it last longer than a regular wood bird house?

A design object you can't stand the sight of: Fake Greek Columns. There are probably more fake Greek columns in just NYC than there are in Greece. Makes you question if we have lost sight of why we have them.

A moment of pure creative joy: The best moment of pure creative joy is the first 15 minutes of the day, when you just had your first sip of coffee but you are still too tired to read any emails. So you just spend those moments doodling in your sketchbook. Can't be beat!

Words to live by: Ideas are cheap.

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

Song: "Dancing in the Moonlight" by Toploader. Cause if you are not having a blast in the process, it isn't worth it.

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: Mauricio Cattelan would be the person I would want to show my work to. I shared a pack of Swedish fish with him at a party once, but that's the closest I think I will ever get to showing my work to him I guess.

**Tatsumi\_designhead** — Edited

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? I think I certainly am. To me, being a designhead means to surround yourself with beauty and curate your life in a way where, everywhere you look, it is filled with stuff that makes you smile.

The last thing you made: A cute card which contained a letter for the current love interest. The rumors are true – I'm a postal service enthusiast.

The next thing you want to make: I want to make a photo book about the Mexican trans community. My angle is to bring an ordinary lens to our community. I feel like trans lives are mostly looked through a fetishistic or dramatic lens. But I'm interested in an everyday look into people's experiences, almost like a diary.

A design object you love: Plastic chairs and any kind of vase.

A design object you can't stand the sight of: I don't think of myself as someone who yucks other people's yums, but I barf a little bit at the sight of birdcages as home decor.

A moment of pure creative joy: Dancing at a party that is blasting great music so hard – you can feel the vibration all through your body. I love to lose myself in careless movement.

Words to live by: If you shit, at least don't make a mess. (direct translation from Spanish: "Si la cagas por lo menos no la embarres.")

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

Song: "Binz" by Solange

Color: Lavender

Natural Material: Leather

Synthetic Material: I love this recycled plastic material called Polygood® – it's just like a funky colorful panel made out of bits of plastic.

What's one design object that has your same energy? Any James Merry mask.

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: I'm torn between Silvia Rivera and Akwaeke Emezi. I mean, both queer icons with a brain to lick!

**Magdalena\_designhead** — Edited

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? I guess I am, huh? I never considered myself a designer because I feel like that's such a grandeur statement for an untrained girl like me, but for the last year or two I've been making the flyers for my pop ups because I am a control freak. In college I studied English with a focus in media and professional writing and took a semester of product design. They taught us a lot about general design, which stuck with me. The biggest takeaway was how to make Canva my bitch and that's been my shorty ever since.

The next thing you want to make: I have been fighting the constant thought of making a zine full of my favorite recipes. It's going to probably mostly be pasta recipes or things I make at 3am when I'm drunk after a night of karaoke.

A design object you love: I'm obsessed with vintage silver serving trays right now. Every table I've set has at least one silver stand on it that's covered in grapes and tangerines. My boyfriend just thrifted me the sexiest silver butter dish from a Savers in San Jose that I'm very excited to get my hands on.

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

Song: "You And Me" by Penny and The Quarters (I actually have the name in the cover font tattooed in the center of my back)

Color: Butter yellow

Synthetic Material: Whatever Skims are made of

If you could show your work to anyone in the world, it would be: Kelis – hands down, no question.

**Ju-Young-Kim\_designhead** — Edited

Are you a designhead + what does that mean to you? I'm in between a design-artsy head – I love industrial objects and shapes metaphorizing function. I often use readymade, used objects (so the history 's been accumulated in it) as a part of my sculpture with hand-craft intervention.

The next thing you want to make: I'm in the middle of the process of making a silkscreen print on glass for an upcoming show in Tokyo. It's about layering x-ray images on transparent surfaces.

A design object you love: Objects on aircraft in general (they're likely less weight, less opacity, slightly smaller than the real scale, but still functional!), transparent gameboys, Murano blown glass lamp, vintage Braun products, art deco design objects, and, very recently, the coperni bag made of 99% air ... and a blown glass bag!

A design object you can't stand the sight of: excessive, careless detail and cheap material ;/

Words to live by: Happiness and sadness have the same weight

Your aesthetic approach embodied as a ...

Texture: shiny, glossy, silvery

Natural Material: glass

Synthetic Material: also glass

What's one design object that has your same energy? It's a hard question – I can't pick! Some retro Italian glass furniture, Venetian windows, and of course the airplane!



Age: 27  
Location: Brooklyn  
Sign: Leo  
IG: @modesofmodes



Age: 26  
Location: Whenever the work is  
Sign: Gemini  
IG: @hotdotlena



Age: 27  
Location: London  
Sign: Leo  
IG: @mabon\_fadida

TEEZO TOUCHDOWN  
CJ ASLAN  
FAN COLLECTIVE  
TEAH BRANDS  
JU YOUNG KIM  
MATAN FADIDA  
(ro)DRIGO MENDEZ SOSA  
TATSUMI MIORI  
MATSUMOTO BARBOSA  
NIK BENTEL  
MAGDALENA O'NEAL  
MATT PECINA OF  
STUDIO GUAPO  
SAHIR AHMED  
AYO FAGBEMI  
JUNWOO PARK  
DAMIEN NICHOLSON  
ALEXANDER LAIRD  
HEATHER LOASE  
HARRISON WYRICK  
EMMA MORA  
HUY DINH  
JUSTIN MARIANO

STRENGTHS  
DESIGNED