

Wallpaper*

SINGAPORE

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EVEALED

IN FULL BLOOM
The city-state's
blossoming creative
economy



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From left to right, Duo by Büro Ole Scheeren; The Gateway by IM Pei; Suntec City by Tsao & McKown

EDITOR'S LETTER

In 2011, Wallpaper* flew into Singapore for a long-overdue and in-depth look at the country's burgeoning creative scene. As we documented in the subsequent *Singapore Revealed* (W*146) we found plenty to admire – in particular, the young cohort of designers, chefs and architects who were building on the pioneering works of the previous generation, and who were pushing into new frontiers of space, taste and silhouette.

Six years on, it seemed timely to call in once more on Singapore for a fresh look at how this precocious island-state has held up in the face of many global challenges. We discovered that no one has

been resting on their laurels. Singapore Art Week, the Singapore Biennale and Singapore Design Week are now key events on the calendar. The island's creatives, meanwhile, are incorporating issues of ecology, aged care, education and public housing into their work. They are even breaking new ground in construction techniques. Most intriguingly, from coast to coast, the buzzword we kept coming up against was 'innovation' – not for its own sake, but rather in terms of business and design. One feeds the other, but it's impossible to unravel what drives what.

Channelling our customary zeitgeist, earlier this year Wallpaper* partnered with DesignSingapore Council, the country's national agency for design, to stage the inaugural Wallpaper* Handmade Classics

exhibition, a showcase of original, one-off pieces and design collaborations commissioned by us and created by international talents. That collection was recently refreshed with new pieces shipped in straight from this year's Salone del Mobile in Milan.

If it's not already clear, these are interesting times. And if it often seems that we're all just lurching from one crisis to another, it's even more important to remember the role that good design and architecture can play in ordering chaos, in synthesising conflicting business and societal demands, in creating beauty, or even in raising the spirits. Remarkably for a country that's barely 700 sq km, it looks as though Singapore is showing us all the way.

Daven Wu, Editor

CONTENTS

04 DRIVING FORCE

The Singapore designers committed to creating environments that are both liveable and commercially viable

08 FLAVOUR ENHANCERS

Two of the city's top fine-dining chefs elevate some simple ingredients into delectable works of art

10 HYPER SPACE

The fearless young talents creating the home of tomorrow

12 CITY SLICKERS

Singapore's landscape transformers

14 TALENT SHOW

We invite ingenious designers to contribute to our next Handmade show



◀ KEN DING

Samsung Electronics

Far from being a satellite to its behemoth Seoul HQ, Samsung's Singapore office is a bona-fide partner in the company's design force. Leading the charge is Ken Ding, the affable Southeast Asia and Oceania director and head of product innovation.

What's different about Samsung's design process?

We design the final experience around humans.

Everyone has different requirements, so when you innovate, you can't take a one-size-fits-all approach.

This requires us to pay special attention to consumer insights. They are at the heart of our business.

What's Samsung's global strategy for driving business innovation through design?

In everything we do, we are guided by a single design ethos: make it meaningful. samsung.com

▶ SARANTA GATTIE

The Working Capitol

The Working Capitol, a 3,066 sq m game-changing co-working space on the edge of Singapore's Chinatown, was launched by Saranta Gattie in 2015. She has recently opened another, designed by Hassell Studio, which sprawls over 5,110 sq m and 11 floors of a CBD tower, and comes with a café, a gym, an outdoor lap pool, a sky garden, a bar and a members' lounge.

Why do co-working spaces make sense in Singapore?

Co-working spaces like ours literally break down walls and make room for people to collaborate and create. This can only lead to better results.

How does design influence the co-working space?

You need to take a human-centred approach.

With us, the results are apparent. Multinationals are courting start-ups. Conversations are sparking. All this originates from good design. theworkingcapitol.com



DRIVING FORCE

Tim Kobe, founder and CEO of Eight Inc, introduces the design innovators and creative thinkers empowering modern Singapore

Our ability to develop and deploy design solutions is fundamental to our survival. We often admire companies such as Airbnb, Apple and Dyson, and think of such innovators as having the ability to change lives. However, design innovation to create a successful nation is a challenge on another scale. And Singapore is leading the way.

Since arriving in Singapore from Silicon Valley seven years ago, I have seen how incredible creative energy and capital have been harnessed to transform the country. It may well be the greatest legacy of the country's first prime minister,

Lee Kuan Yew, who demonstrated how to approach the challenges that confront a changing world, and how to do so in a commercially effective way. He insisted that a great idea alone is not enough, that innovation happens only when people adopt a vision. For that reason, Singapore's modern design approach is based on perpetual learning. The solutions that have produced the success of Singapore today may not be applicable tomorrow, which means evolving creativity is a premium. As Dr Beh Swan Gin, chairman of the Design Masterplan Committee (DMC), points out, 'Design can play a significant role in the future economy of Singapore. It is an important driver of innovation and value creation. It can also add vibrancy and richness to our national identity.'

The vision of the DMC is to help Singapore make better use of design to drive innovation and growth. The creatives profiled here are all fine exemplars of this approach. Their work shows a commercial yet humane approach to design in harmony with Singapore's commitment to creating environments that are both liveable and commercially viable.

Photography: Phil Dunlop, Jason Koxvold Writers: Ricky Yeo, Daven Wu



◀ MOSHE SAFDIE

Safdie Architects

Israeli-born Safdie is best known in Singapore for creating the Marina Bay Sands resort, but all eyes are currently on his Jewel Changi Airport development.

What's the best design advice you've been given?

Louis Kahn's quip about asking the brick what it wants to be comes to mind. The metaphor focuses on how the materiality of architecture informs its language. It's a fundamental lesson for a designer.

How does Singapore live up to its designation as Unesco Creative City of Design?

Singapore is probably at the forefront, worldwide, of publicly initiated urban design and ambitious landscaping of the urban environment. This has had a tremendous effect on the lives of its people.

Is it really possible to make a business out of innovative design?

Yes, if by innovative design you mean a building that responds to its programme and its setting, manifested in its liveability and utility. msafdie.com



◀ SCOTT MAGUIRE

Dyson

Barely a decade ago, Dyson set up shop in Singapore to develop and make the world's first high-speed, digital electric motor. Since then, its 1,100-strong office, overseen by global engineering director Scott Maguire, has become a key outpost for the company's concept-to-production R&D, manufacture of digital motors, supply chain operations and commercial activities. The results, used in all its products, underpin core Dyson hardware and software.

What is the remit of Dyson's Singapore operations?

Singapore has a critical role in the development, design and manufacturing of technologies across all our product categories, including our core technology, the Dyson digital motor. Also, more than 300 engineers are now focused on artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, vision systems and fluid dynamics to bring hardware, electronics and software together.

How does Dyson reconcile the need to innovate with the business of design?

Form should always follow function. You can have the most beautiful looking machine, but if it can't fundamentally perform, it is a gimmick.

What makes Dyson's creative process unique?

Our approach is always to solve a problem. We start with how technology can do that. We then build and test prototypes until we have a step-change solution. The form of the machine follows. dyson.com.sg

▶ THAM KHAI MENG

Ogilvy & Mather

The Singapore-born, New York-based Tham is co-chairman and worldwide chief creative officer of advertising giant Ogilvy & Mather. He has long championed 'pervasive creativity', in which every Ogilvy staffer, regardless of rank, has a responsibility to be creative. Despite early scepticism, the idea has paid dividends, with the firm regularly sweeping global advertising awards.

What's your take on the business of design?

We all know how easily ideas are strangled at birth. The more original the idea, the stranger it appears and the more hostility there will be to greet it. It needs defending ferociously. Great design cannot exist without anyone fighting for it.

Singapore was designated Unesco Creative City of Design in 2015. How should Singapore's creative industry live up to that designation?

It needs to take on bigger and bolder challenges, use design as a tool to solve business problems, and transform Singapore into a sustainable tropical city. How do you scale urban farming, use more alternative energy, rely less on fossil fuel, cut down on cars and use more bicycles? Singapore has the funds, the ambition and the appetite to answer these questions.

What's the best design you've seen in Singapore?

For me, it's the classic shophouse with a shop on the ground floor and residences above. It is an amalgamation of clever, efficient design, and it makes terrific business sense. ogilvy.com



▲ PATRICIA URQUIOLA

Studio Urquiola

For the Spanish-born, Milan-based designer, fresh perspectives are par for the course, an outlook seen to best effect in her interiors work on the WOHA-designed Oasia Hotel Downtown in Singapore's Tanjong Pagar quarter, which she says was inspired by the building's voids. 'We transformed them into sky-terraces so the occupants can have a direct experience with the city.'

What is the best advice you have received about developing your design and business skills?

Achille Castiglioni taught me to identify 'the fundamental element' around which every project revolves. Sometimes you compromise and you lose

the initial sense of what you thought a design was about. The fundamental element keeps you on track.

How do you reconcile the need to innovate with the business of design?

There are constant functions, but they are evolving continuously. Sometimes the boundaries blend.

The way we use a sofa now is not the same as in the past.

What surprises you most about the design and architecture of Singapore?

It's in continuous development. I find this very stimulating. The architecture is imposing, but what impresses me most is the vast greenery in a country where land is so limited. patriciurquiola.com



Carabinero prawns with seasonal tomatoes, vintage sherry and Kristal caviar

An interpretation of Tan's favourite vegetable: oignon doux des Cévennes

Botanica, a selection of botanicals in a variety of preparations

JASON TAN

Diners go to Tan's Corner House as much for the setting, a colonial manse in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, as for his pan-Singaporean gastrobotanica menu, with Tan sending out plates of Carabinero prawns, Australian Wagyu and New Zealand blue cod strewn with extravagantly hued tubers, vines, fungi and flowers. cornerhouse.com.sg

Table, \$900, by Gabriel Tan, gabriel-tan.com. 'Dough & Piatti' plates, prototypes, by Studio Juju, studio-juju.com. Chopsticks, \$522, by Marusan Shikki; plate, \$590 for set of three, by Kihara; 'Mamezara' sauce dish, \$512, by Lee Xinli, all from Supermama, supermamastore.com



Blue swimmer crab curry with turmeric, galangal and kaffir lime leaf

Homemade kueh pie tee shell with salmon tartare, pickled shallot, and laksa leaf pesto

Buah keluak of braised local chicken with Peranakan signature black nut sambal

Rangers Valley Wagyu beef rib rendang, with serunding and turmeric leaf

'Monolith' table, \$5675, by Melvin Ong, for Desinere, desinere.com.sg. Plates, from \$50, by Supermama, supermamastore.com. Chopsticks; 'Dough & Piatti' tray, both as before. 'Knead' dish, \$51,380 for set of three, by Chin Guo Hong, for d.lab, dlab.com.sg

MALCOLM LEE

Lee marries modern culinary techniques with vivid Peranakan flavours and heritage recipes learnt at his mother's knee. His Candlenut outpost in Dempsey is a temple to nostalgic comfort food, dressed up for a cashed-up generation of millennials who appreciate both the experience and the experiments. comodempsey.sg

Singapore Revealed

FLAVOUR ENHANCERS

Classic Singaporean fare reinterpreted by two of the city-state's brightest chefs

Photography: Phil Dunlop Interiors: Maria Sobrino Writer: Daven Wu

Celebrating the city-state's burgeoning creative economy, DesignSingapore Council's Innovation by Design conference, held earlier this year, attracted a diverse line-up of designers, makers, thinkers and business mavericks from all over the world. 'You only need to look at the skyline to see that Singapore has the capacity to support design in a substantial way, allowing some extraordinary creativity to become reality,' says designer Beatrix Ong, consultant on the Atlas Bar in Parkview Square. Ong describes Singapore as 'a unique melting pot of Southeast Asian cultures with a global aesthetic'.

It's the juxtaposition of tradition and technology, an influx of fearless young talent and 'a hyper-intersection of culture', as Ernesto Quinteros, chief design officer of Johnson & Johnson, terms it, that makes contemporary Singapore so vibrant. Adds Mauro Porcini,

chief design officer at PepsiCo, 'It's like entering a parallel dimension, totally projected into the future, conceived and produced by the imagination, the spirit of innovation and the creativity of its people. In the streets of Singapore, nature dances with architecture, creating jazz for your eyes, food for your mind, and inspiration for your soul.'

'As with the Netherlands, Singapore is built on artificial land,' says the Dutch artist Daan Roosegaarde, founder of social design lab Studio Roosegaarde. 'Creativity and technology is what made us survive and evolve. The future of Singapore's design will not be another chair but a hybrid of nature and technology to create our home of tomorrow.'

'Singapore,' concludes Quinteros, 'is uniquely positioned to become the hybrid-vigour epicentre of this century.'

Our group of designers were photographed at the National Gallery Singapore, designed by Studio Milou

HYPER SPACE

Singapore's burgeoning design scene, and the creatives drawn to its flame

Photography: Jovian Lim Writer: Simon Mills



BEATRIX ONG
Luxury fashion accessories designer

LOW CHEAW HWEI
Head of design, Philips ASEAN Pacific

PATRICK CHIA
Director, Design Incubation Centre

ERNESTO QUINTEROS
Chief design officer, Johnson & Johnson

MAURO PORCINI
Chief design officer, PepsiCo

CHELSIA LAU
Chief designer, Ford Motor Co

ANDRÉ FU
Architect, founder of AFSO

DAAN ROOSEGAARDE
Artist, founder of Studio Roosegaarde

CITY SLICKERS

The astute architects and sharp minds rethinking Singapore as a capital place to live

Illustrator: Adam Simpson Writers: Daven Wu, Ricky Yeo, Whang Yee Ling

A casual scan of Singapore's skyline reveals an intriguing mix of old and new. Old in the form of the shophouses of Chinatown and the East Coast and the midcentury black and white bungalows that dot the outskirts of Orchard and Alexandra Roads. New in the form of an astonishing haul of modern classics by the likes of Zaha Hadid, Norman Foster, IM Pei, Richard Meier and Thomas Heatherwick. Still more interesting, however, are the projects that are not just adding to a new skyline, but which are also addressing the questions and dilemmas of

millennial urban planning. How, for instance, can architecture be effectively retooled to address an ageing population or the educational needs of the very young? How can nature be integrated into the urban landscape in a realistic way that doesn't become a sci-fi parody? How does one create a building that truly meets the needs of its occupants? Singapore doesn't pretend to have all the answers, but as you'll see from the disparate projects featured here, this little island state is leading the way with both ingenuity and chutzpah.

◀ LORONG 24A SHOPHOUSE SERIES

Seven architects gutted and redefined eight terraced houses built in the 1920s in Geylang. In the hands of less optimistic architects, the buildings might have gone the way of the lurid KTV pubs and banal offices that bedevil architecture of this kind across Singapore. Instead, the architects, among them HYL A and Zarch Collaboratives, nudged conservation directives to the limit, dramatising the interiors with unexpected spatial experiences. thelor24ashophouseseries.com



▶ SKYTERRACE@DAWSON

In response to a government call-out for a housing prototype that also incorporated the needs of an ageing population, architects SCDA created interlocking modules that allow generations of the same family to live together while creating structural boundaries for privacy. SkyTerrace is just one component of a larger community goal of promoting cross-generational interactions, such as positioning childcare facilities close to eldercare centres. scaarchitects.com



▶ OUR TAMPINES HUB

Our Tampines Hub is proof that community engagement can be more than mere rhetoric. Even before the first line was drawn, DP Architects held roadshows and block parties, and harnessed social media to gauge the views of Tampines' residents. The result is an airy structure, designed by residents for residents, with sports, cultural and lifestyle facilities, rooftop garden terraces, a solar roof and food waste recycling technologies. dpa.com.sg



◀ MANDAI NATURE PRECINCT

Mandai, in northern Singapore, is currently being transformed into a wildlife destination, and this ambitious project looks set to be a new urban model for greening a metropolis while considering environmental and conservation issues. For Seah Chee Kien, of project architects RSP, the challenge has been to 'sensitively design for the most elusive and native wildlife residents while creating memorable experiences for visitors who value being close to nature.' mandai.com



▼ CROWNE PLAZA CHANGI EXTENSION

The extension of the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Changi Airport, designed by architects WOHA, is, in terms of construction technology, a bona-fide gamechanger. The 243 new rooms, including walls, floors, door handles, bathroom tiles, carpets, sinks and bathtubs, were assembled off-site in a Shanghai factory, shipped to Singapore, then slotted into place on-site. If the savings in time and cost aren't sufficiently impressive (50 per cent reduction in manpower and 67 per cent in construction time), then the implications for the construction industry at large certainly are. woha.net



▲ LIEN FOUNDATION

Founded in 1980, the Lien Foundation works with architects and designers to reimagine education facilities and eldercare homes. For example, the foundation bankrolled Lekker Architects' Caterpillar's Cove, a learning lab that eschews classrooms so as to literally free its students from structural constraints. Children have also been invited to contribute ideas for their dream playground, which will be built at a kindergarten later this year. lienfoundation.org





TALENT SHOW

Have you got what it takes to participate in next year's Wallpaper* Handmade exhibition?

Photography: James John Jetel, Phil Dunlop Writer: Simon Mills

Back in March, DesignSingapore Council announced a joint partnership to host the Brainstorm Design conference in Singapore in 2018 and 2019. Supported by Singapore's Economic Development Board, the new annual event will comprise a two-day conference bringing together global thought leaders in design and business to share strategies for design innovation.

The launch also marked the Singapore debut of the Wallpaper* Handmade exhibition at the Gillman Barracks. Showcasing original pieces and unique design collaborations, commissioned by Wallpaper* and created by internationally renowned talents, it was a landmark event for the city-state's design scene, and it led to a second show, Wallpaper* Handmade On Tour 2017 in Singapore, held in partnership with DesignSingapore Council, which runs until 31 October. Handmade Singapore has also entered a third stage;

Wallpaper* Handmade has invited Singapore designers to contribute to its 2018 exhibition. The theme is Wellness and Wonder, and we are looking for designers to create pieces that take you on the journey towards a better you: objects that exercise the cerebellum and replenish the body, jet-wash the life force and restore the innate harmony of the individual. All qualified Singapore citizens and permanent residents – design, architecture and fashion creatives who have graduated in the last five years – are invited to submit a proposal.

'This is an exceptional opportunity for Singapore talents to demonstrate their creativity and innovation, says Agnes Kwek, DesignSingapore Council's executive director. 'The exposure will be far-reaching for Singapore designers, as well as for the Singapore brand.' *The closing date for entries is 30 September 2017. For details, see wallpaper.com/w-bespoke/singapore-callout*

Wallpaper's Handmade On Tour exhibition featured original pieces, including 'The Portal', by Snohetta, Erik Jørgensen Møbelfabrik and Everything Elevated, and 'Solteira' bench by Pedro Paulo Venzon and Driade (this page), both from Handmade 2017, as well as 'Shoe Tree', by Beatrix Ong and Joined + Jointed, from Handmade 2016, and

'Ricecube', by Michael Elmgreen and Solvej 3D, from Handmade 2012 (opposite, top row), and 'Infinity' table, by Karen Chekerdjian and Grandinetti, Modular column, by Tijmen Smeulders and Olivier van Herpt, and Monolithic Font, by Tino Seubert and Pibamarmi (opposite, bottom row), which are all from Handmade 2017

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**INNOVATION,
GROWTH &
NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

MEET.

Singapore is an inspiring city with tremendous depth of expertise and breadth of experience in creating exciting opportunities through events. Its innovation capabilities combined with world-class infrastructure and award-winning venues make it the ideal place to turn your passion for growth into reality. It's where great minds converge, connect and collaborate. And new possibilities are created to shape the future. Let us help you take your business further, plan your next event at VisitSingapore.com/mice.

