

S—3 Via
Pietro
Giannone3,
Milan

CHOP- ↑
STICKS 箸
2026
4.21—26

箸者

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CHOPSTICKS

箸

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Curated by
Yoko Choy

A globally appreciated object, chopsticks serve as both a cultural symbol and a timeless design reference, bridging heritage and modernity, reminding designers and users alike that meaningful form grows from the values it carries. Chopsticks embody one of East Asia's most iconic and oldest design typologies, an example of how elegant simplicity can emerge from deep cultural tradition. Rooted in centuries of ritual and philosophy, their refined proportions and functional purity continue to inspire contemporary design thinking, emphasising balance, tactility, and sustainability.

At the heart of “CHOPSTICKS 箸” lies a question that has shaped centuries of exchange: what binds China, Japan, and Korea through culture, and how does that shared foundation manifest in contemporary creativity? Historically, the region was sustained by a deep network of cultural coherence, a shared system of values, aesthetics, and thought. Common threads can be found in Confucian ethics of social harmony, Buddhist and Taoist philosophies of balance and impermanence, the use of classical Chinese characters as carriers of meaning and artistry, architectural and material traditions shaped by craftsmanship, and etiquette practices centred on daily rituals such as food and tableware.

This enduring cultural ecosystem provides a grounded context for examining design and creativity today. While each country continues to evolve along its own modern trajectory, shaped by differing social experiences, education systems, and design sectors, the underlying sensibilities remain interrelated. The shared heritage has become a quiet, connective rhythm beneath the diversity of contemporary expression. Today, this allows designers in East Asia to articulate perspectives that are at once historically rooted and globally conversant, developing in parallel as distinct practices yet continuously enriched through dialogue with global ideas, technologies, and aesthetics.

By bringing together creative talents from China, Japan, and South Korea, “CHOPSTICKS 箸” seeks to reveal how this interplay of continuity and transformation becomes visible in design. Each designer's work embodies a conversation between inherited cultural memory and present-day experience, between what remains distinctly regional and what resonates universally. Through the reinterpretation of a familiar object, chopsticks, the exhibition invites audiences to perceive how shared traditions evolve into unique modern narratives, extending East Asia's cultural coherence into the design language of our time.

@missyoko

Yoko Choy is a design journalist and creative consultant whose work centres on cross-cultural exchange. As China Editor of Wallpaper* magazine, she moves between Hong Kong and Amsterdam, bridging Eastern and Western perspectives. Her practice focuses on fostering dialogue through design and art as shared languages, supporting cultural and commercial exchange. She collaborates with global brands and institutions including Assouline, Art Basel, Beijing Design Week, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton, and regularly serves on juries and speaks at international design awards and conferences.

Aldo Cibic 安东西比克 (IT)

No Slip.Hybrid Chopsticks 防滑筷子

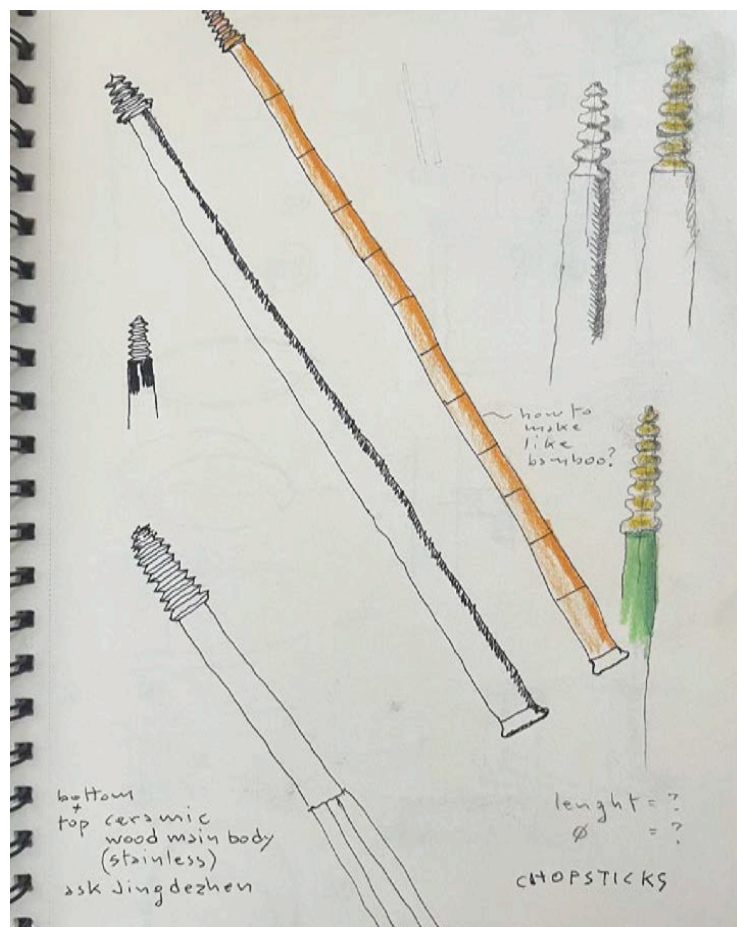
Walnut and brass
L225XD10 mm

The designer's first experience with chopsticks came at age 24 in a Los Angeles Japanese restaurant, alongside mentor Ettore Sottsass. It proved embarrassing: they were the only one at the table unable to use them, a feeling of shame and provincialism followed. Years later, living in Milan amid many Chinese restaurants, gradual improvement came—yet full proficiency eluded, with a lingering sense of inadequacy.

Aldo Cibic (IT)

The persistent challenge remained slippery foods—shrimps or vegetables that evade grasp. When asked to design chopsticks, this problem inspired a solution: a tip with subtle teeth to secure such items. The result transforms the chopsticks into a more sculptural object while remaining close to its function, subtly shifting its identity.

This invention, born from personal need, aims to serve as a useful and fun tool for beginners worldwide—easing the embarrassment of approach and inviting more confident use.





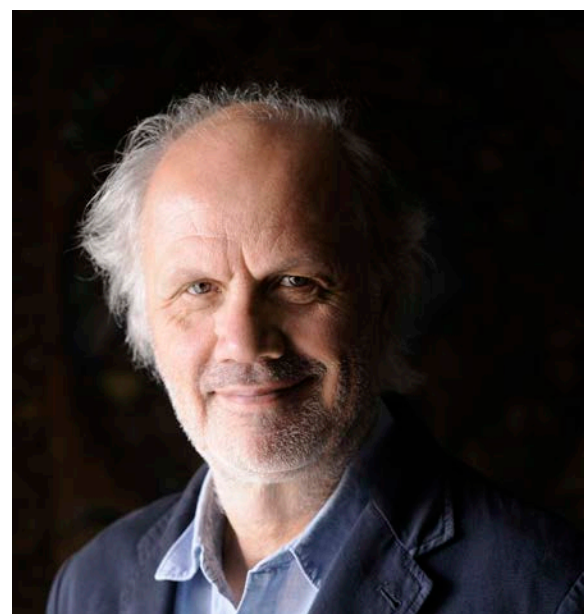
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@aldocibic

Born in Schio, Vicenza, Aldo Cibic (b. 1955) develops an early and self-directed passion for design. As a partner of Sottsass Associati, he co-founds Memphis in 1981, the influential collective that reshapes the global discourse on design and architecture through colour, form, and experimentation. Known for embracing “experimentation as praxis”, he launches his first self-produced collection, Standard (1991), and continues to explore social interaction and community through projects such as The Solid Side (1995), New Stories New Design (2002), Microrealities (2004), and Rethinking Happiness (2010), all presented at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

Established in the late 1980s, Cibic→Workshop becomes one of Italy’s most significant design and architecture studios, working internationally across architecture, interiors, design, and multimedia. Collaborating with universities, research centres, and global partners, the studio opens a Shanghai office in 2020 to shape socially and culturally meaningful environments.

Aldo Cibic (IT)



Big-Game - Empty Chopsticks 空筷

(CH)

Titanium 6Al-4V
L220XW7XD4 mm

When Big-Game was founded 22 years ago, the aim is to design objects for everyday life. Today, the studio is fortunate to do exactly that, creating furniture, lighting, tableware, watches, and more. The three designers come from France, Switzerland, and Belgium, bringing together diverse backgrounds and international experiences into their practice. Based in Switzerland, the studio collaborates with clients in 15 countries, including Hay in Denmark, Alessi in Italy, Ikea in Sweden, Nespresso and Swiss Airlines in Switzerland, Karimoku and Muji in Japan, and Jaju and AGO in Korea.



For the ‘CHOPSTICKS 箸’ project, the studio immediately envisions a pair of ultra-light travel chopsticks—two extremely durable metal pieces with carved-out details for weight savings and a connecting feature that doubles as a chopstick stand. Crafted from titanium—a lightweight metal that is extremely resistant and food-safe—these chopsticks reflect years of work in Japan, Korea, and China, as well as lived experience growing up in Asia. The design subtly blends influences from the three cultures: metal as in Korea, a square section transitioning to a round tip as in China, and short and slightly tapered like in Japan.



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@biggamedesign

Founded in Lausanne in 2004 by Augustin Scott de Martinville (b. 1980, Switzerland/France), Grégoire Jeanmonod (b. 1978, Switzerland), and Elric Petit (b. 1978, Switzerland/Belgium), Big-Game is a Swiss design studio creating accessible, charming, and functional products across furniture, lighting, watches, tableware, and consumer electronics. Drawing from diverse backgrounds—Augustin having grown up in China, Grégoire in the Swiss canton of Vaud, and Elric in Belgium and Algeria—the trio combines cultural breadth with a pragmatic sense of design. Their work merges simplicity and usability with character and emotion, reflecting a contemporary interpretation of industrial design.

Collaborating with global brands including Alessi, Hay, Ikea, Muuto, and Nespresso, the studio has earned multiple international awards, with works held in major museum collections such as MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich.

Big-Game (CH)

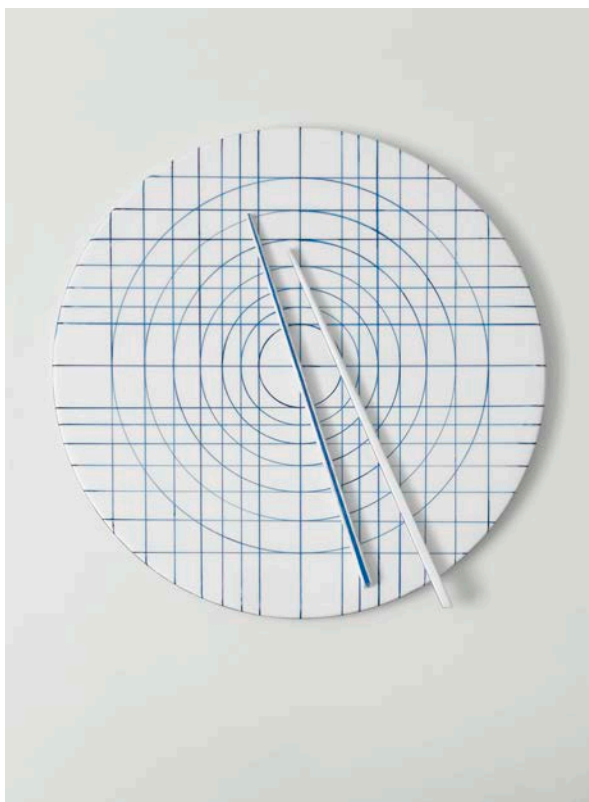


Duyi Han
韩笃一

(CH)

-
Alignment
对齐

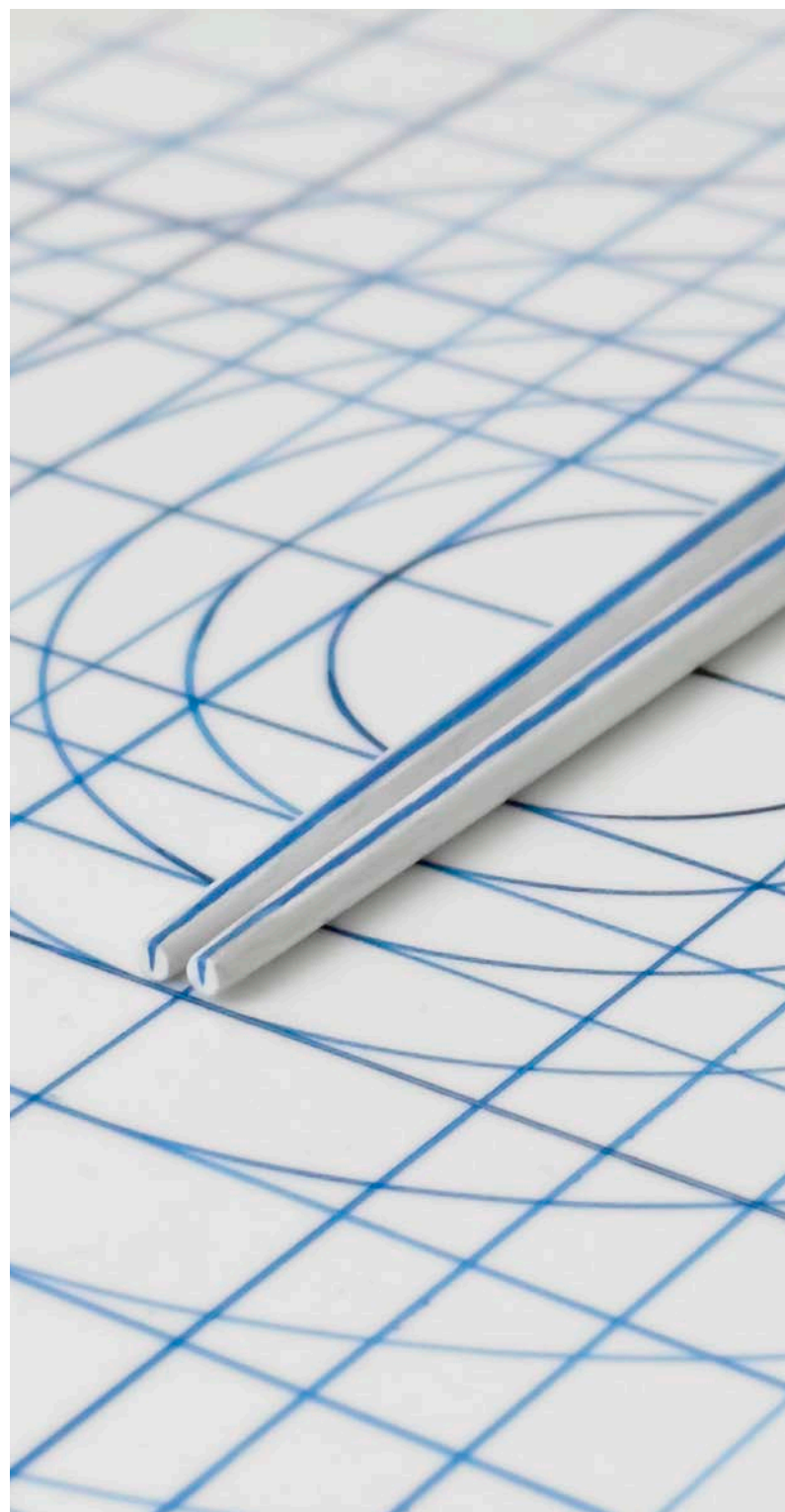
You experience an urge of OCD trying to align the two lines. Some people say it is the Confucian idea of rules and control that is functionally useless in this case.



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Chopsticks: Malas wood, lapis lazuli, glaze
L240XØ6 mm
Plate: Melamine, glaze
D300XH10 mm



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CHOPSTICKS 箸

'Alignment' is a limited-edition pair of chopsticks developed from a familiar Chinese form and refined through a single intervention. The proportions remain close to everyday use. The body is finished in ivory-coloured lacquer, and along each stick runs a continuous inlay of lapis lazuli. This line introduces a visible direction to an object normally handled without thinking about orientation. Chopsticks are among the most widely used tools in daily life—a global pedagogical object. Millions learn precision through them early and through repetition, not instruction. Their use depends on coordination, subtle pressure, and small adjustments of the fingers.

The addition of the lapis line does not change how the chopsticks function, but it makes rotation and alignment perceptible. A slight turn becomes visible; bringing the two sticks together becomes something one notices. Users may feel an urge to align, as a regulatory instinct. The design reveals this impulse to regulate, align, and correct, reflecting Duyi Han's practice of engaging the cognitive dimension of design and making invisible systems visible. The work draws from cultural traditions where everyday objects participate in habits of order and self-discipline.

In Confucian thought, conduct is shaped through repeated gestures and attention to form. Rather than illustrating these ideas directly, the design treats them as a background condition. The object does not instruct the user how to behave; it simply introduces a reference that can be followed or ignored. In the exhibition, the chopsticks sit against a grid field within a larger system of orientation. The grid does not dictate alignment but makes deviation legible. The project approaches the utensil not as a symbol of identity but as a quiet learning device embedded in daily life. Through a minimal shift, it draws attention to how order is formed through the body.

@duyi.han

Duyi Han (b. 1994) creates objects, images, and environments as “neurasthenic prescriptions”—visual and spatial compositions that evoke emotion, address the psychological conditions of contemporary life, and explore evolving structures of visual culture. His practice merges the visual strategies of fashion, the symbolic frameworks of belief systems, and the experimental logic of pharmaceutical science. Drawing on art history, scientific theory, and Taoist ideas of transformation and impermanence, he treats the history of visual culture as living material for reinterpretation, positioning art and design as tools for reimagining emotion and meaning across cultures. His work, held in SFMOMA and presented internationally, includes projects with Dior, Tarun Tahiliani, and Apple. Trained in architecture at Cornell, he worked at Herzog & de Meuron and is based between Shanghai and global contexts.

Duyi Han (CN)



Haus of Hu 互户 (CN)

-

Tact 入口知度

The chopsticks retain their classical form. Their message, however, is delivered through touch.



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Cast brass with silver plating,
resin with natural lacquer
L240XØ8 mm

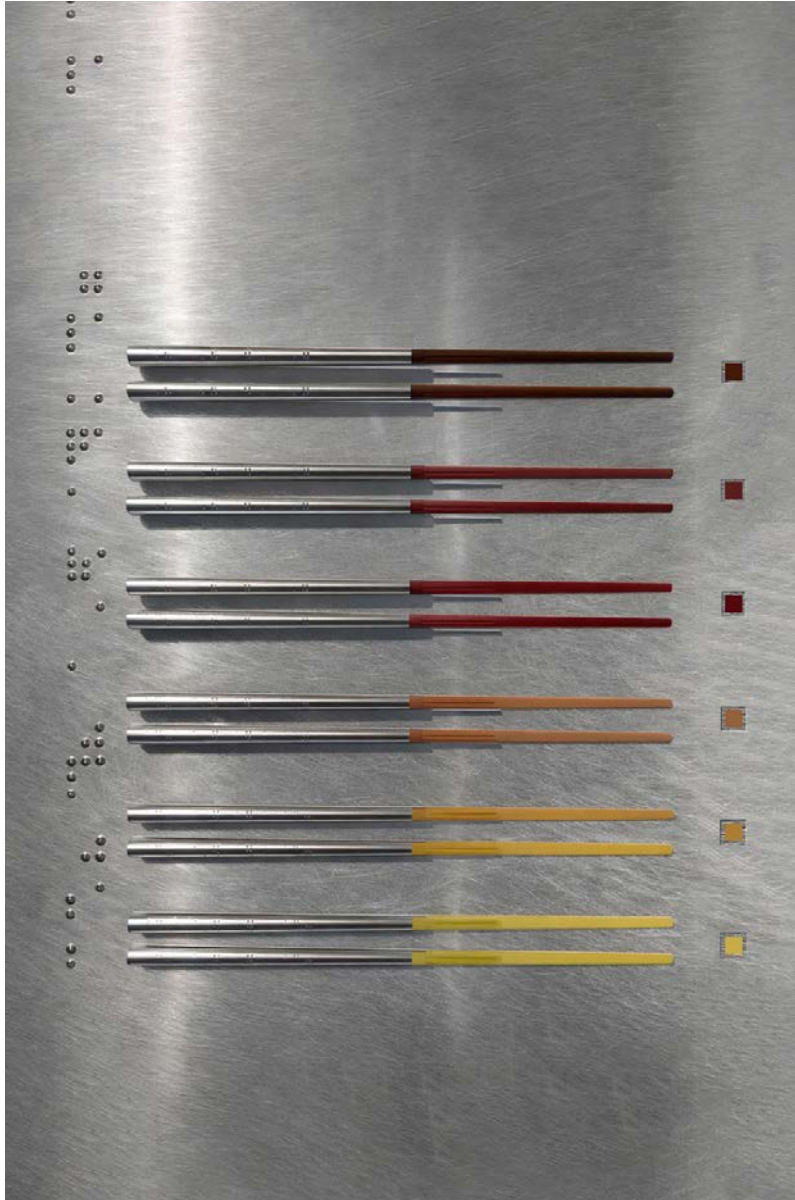
Engraved in Chinese Braille, the phrase reads: Rù kǒu zhī dù—‘Upon entering the mouth, one knows its measure’. During a meal, we are first drawn by colour, aroma, and flavour—sight anticipates, scent awakens, taste confirms—yet before taste, there is touch. In Japanese culture, gratitude is spoken aloud before eating. This project proposes a quieter gesture within a Chinese sensibility: rather than speech, the ritual unfolds through the hand. As fingers reach for the chopsticks, they encounter the engraved Braille phrase, knowing measure at first touch. A South China Morning Post article notes that chopsticks have remained largely unchanged for over 3,000 years, a testament to the completeness of their design. The work preserves this familiar silhouette while reconsidering material and structure.

The chopsticks are built around a stainless steel core finished in silver plating, balancing durability with refinement. To extend their lifespan, they are composed of two parts: a detachable tip and a main body. The tip is made from semi-translucent resin, while the body is silver; the interchangeable head allows easy cleaning and replacement, ensuring longevity without losing elegance. Variations in resin colour suggest personal choice and shifting mood.

An accompanying artefact rests around the chopsticks, hybridising fork and knife, reflecting the intertwined nature of Eastern and Western dining. Sized to Western cutlery standards, it reinterprets dù (measure) as both restraint and proportion across cultures. Clipped onto the chopsticks, it extends measure into a spatial and cultural dialogue between traditions.

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CHOPSTICKS 箸



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@haus_of_hu

Haus of Hu is a multidisciplinary design house based in London, founded by Ellen Hu (b. 1997). Its name derives from the Chinese characters 互户 : 互 (HU) signifies mutual and shared connections, while 户 (HU) resembles a house, symbolising the emergence of a new collective. Haus of Hu proposes a new language of contemporary design infused with Sinophone sensibilities, emphasising the nuances between alternative perspectives, the East and the West, the classical and the minimal. The house introduces blurred categorisation into conceptual and aesthetic products through the translation of collective memories, each offering timelessness in its potential to evolve and transform alongside the individual and their needs.

Haus of Hu (CN)



Jin Kuramoto
倉本仁 (JP)

-
Pasta
Chopsticks
意大利面筷子



Flour
L230XØ10 mm

In Japan, chopsticks have traditionally been crafted from wood or bamboo—materials that are washed and reused many times—while even disposable chopsticks have long been made from environmentally considerate timber. At the same time, edible utensils such as chopsticks, spoons, and even small dishes have occasionally appeared in Japanese cuisine, particularly in desserts.

Today, these ideas are being reconsidered amid global efforts to sustain forests, reduce plastic waste, and promote circular design practices. With this background in mind, the project explores the potential and experiential richness of transforming pasta—an iconic material of European culinary culture—into chopsticks.

By reimagining pasta beyond its conventional role as food, it asks what new possibilities might emerge at the intersection of culture, material, and sustainability. As for its life after use, the chopsticks may of course return to the table as part of a meal, yet they might also find applications beyond anything initially imagined—serving as a source of inspiration for those who encounter them.



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@jinkuramoto

Jin Kuramoto (b. 1976) is a Japanese designer who established Jin Kuramoto Studio Inc. in 2008. Born and raised on a small island in the countryside, he loves fishing and people. He designs all kinds of products—furniture, home appliances, eyewear, and automobiles—with the belief that the form of things tells a different story. He values the process of repeated trial and error: touching materials, listening to their voice, prototyping in a studio full of inspiration, and making positive accidents. His work has won numerous international awards, including the Red Dot Award, the Good Design Award, and the iF Product Design Award.

Jin Kuramoto (JP)



Joongho Choi 崔重鎬 (KR)

- Not Set 不一致



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Stainless steel SUS304
Assembled: 35 × 35 × 235 mm
Chopstick holder: 35 × 35 × 130 mm
Individual chopstick: 5 × 3 × 215 mm

The project reinterprets Korea's most familiar dining tool—the metal chopsticks—by making it visible again. Beyond mere function, it becomes an object through which a concept can be read. In Korea, chopsticks are commonly made of metal, their form largely standardised into flat, rectangular shapes. This is less a matter of ornamental taste or traditional aesthetics than a structural outcome shaped by material constraints, production processes, and mass manufacturing. In other words, it is not so much a 'designed shape' as a form refined through the conditions of making and use.

Korean flat metal chopsticks have become so familiar that they are no longer noticed. At the table, diners do not bother matching a pair—they simply pick any two from the holder. Even when patterns are engraved, they rarely evoke emotion; nothing lingers beyond function. The metal chopsticks have thus ceased to be objects of attention and instead have become a baseline of everyday life. They exist as instruments of immediate use, not as a 'set'. Diners pick them up without checking for a match, allowing function to precede emotion. In this sense, the very idea of a 'set' runs counter to how chopsticks are actually used in Korea.

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CHOPSTICKS 箸

In 'Not Set', the design intentionally avoids creating a 'perfect pair'. Form and texture are subtly misaligned—appearing almost identical, yet never exactly the same. The phrase 'Not Set' is not a defect but a declaration. While it states that something is not a set, the phrase can only be completed when two pieces come together. Within this paradox—denial and dependence at once—the project reveals a relationship in which separation and connection coexist. By naming the work 'Not Set', an everyday tool—the Korean metal chopsticks—is repositioned as an object of contemplation rather than one of unconscious use.

The project does not romanticise tradition; instead, it bends function to construct a concept. By mixing different forms and colours—silver, black, gold and blue—it visualises the randomness of pairing and the patterns of use that emerge from it. Form, finish and text operate together within a single logical system to express this relationship of similarity and variance. This is not about designing chopsticks, but about articulating a distinctly Korean sense of indifference—a calm acceptance of the ordinary. The work declares the default condition of Korean chopsticks as an identity, making the invisible visible once again.

The design takes the standardised Korean metal chopsticks as its foundation, articulating the condition of being 'not set'. While retaining the familiar flat and rectangular proportions, subtle differences are introduced to create pairings that appear similar yet are never identical. Colours and finishes—silver, black, gold and blue—intersect in random combinations to reveal the contingency of pairing. Through engraved text, those minute differences are made legible, shifting attention from the individual object to the act of pairing itself.

Joongho Choi Studio is a Seoul-based design studio that expresses a contemporary sensibility through cultural convergence. Working across product, furniture, spatial design, and branding, the studio creates projects that connect diverse contexts and perspectives. Each project begins with a question—collaborating closely with clients to reinterpret the present state of a brand and expand its potential, where a precise question becomes a tool that opens up new ways of seeing. Rather than rejecting conventions outright, the studio repositions them—shifting, reframing, and placing the familiar in new contexts, allowing fresh responses to emerge from that tension. When differing tastes and cultures intersect, unexpected balances take shape, and within this point of convergence, the studio designs the sensibility of its time. Joined by Dohun Lee and Changdo Oh, founder and creative director Joongho Choi (b. 1982) oversees the studio's overall direction and philosophy, exploring new possibilities for everyday design through a refined and contemporary lens.



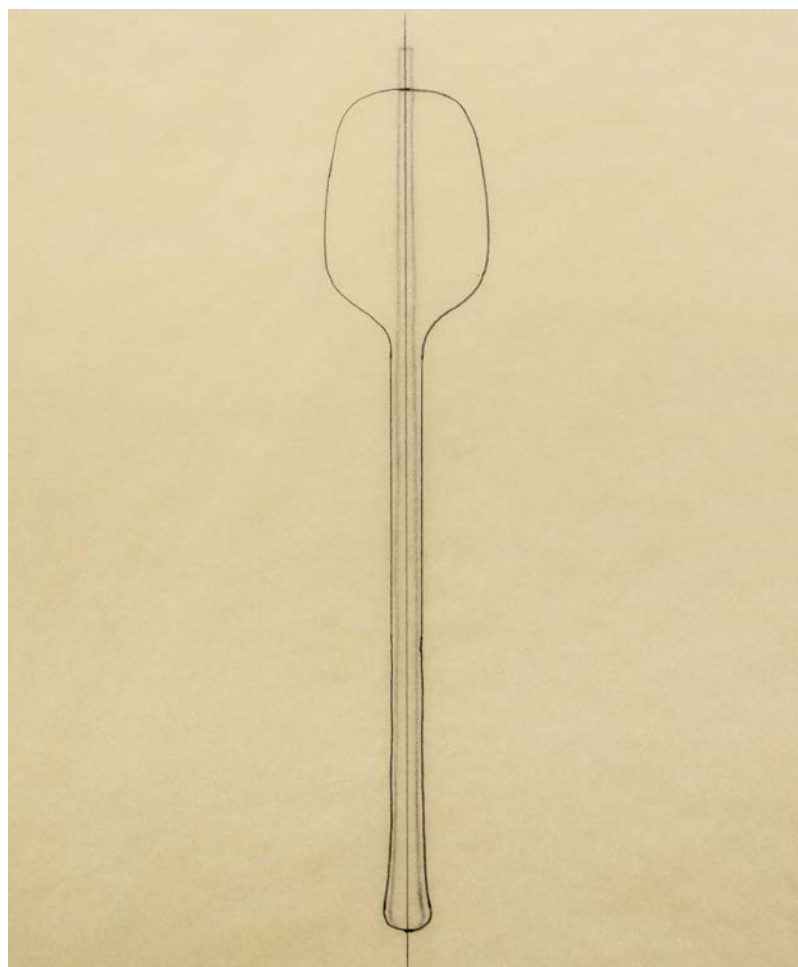
Kuo Duo

-

Seon

線

(KR)



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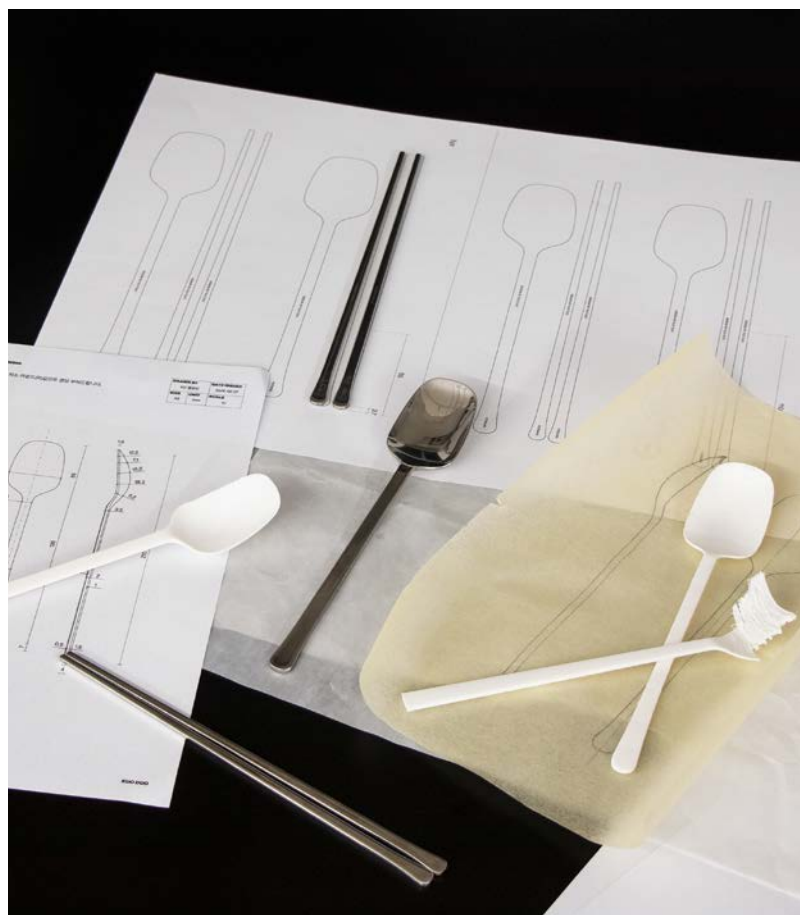
Stainless steel
Chopsticks: W8.5XD220XH4 mm
Spoon: W39.7XD210XH15.8 mm

In Korea, cutlery is composed of a 'spoon' and 'chopsticks' used as a set, reflecting a dining culture in which rice, soup, and side dishes are served together. The spoon is used for rice and liquids, while chopsticks are used for side dishes, creating a natural division of function. In particular, Korean metal chopsticks have evolved into a thin, flat form that allows for precise control while also ensuring stability when placed on the table. The material has also transitioned from traditional brass to stainless steel, offering improved hygiene, durability, and ease of maintenance. Based on this cultural context, Kuo Duo designed a cutlery set that reflects a restrained aesthetic rooted in functionality rather than ornamentation.

'Seon', meaning 'line' in Korean, begins with an exploration of the various lines that define the form of the cutlery. Through studying the spoon and chopsticks from multiple perspectives, their proportions and curves were carefully refined. The handle draws from the formal language of traditional Korean cutlery, with its end shaped into a droplet form that introduces a subtle sense of tension. In contrast, the head departs from the conventional oval, reinterpreted into a form that is slightly closer to a square, suggesting a new typology for contemporary Korean cutlery. The production and finishing were realised in collaboration with the Korean tableware brand 'Horang', whose generational expertise enabled a high level of metal finishing.

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CHOPSTICKS 箸



The collection will be presented in a range of finishes, including gold inspired by traditional brass, stainless steel commonly used in contemporary Korean households, and a newly introduced rose gold. Developed as a fully functional product for everyday use, the design was also refined for repeatable mass production through mould-making, achieved through close collaboration. For Kuo Duo, this project goes beyond reinterpreting a familiar object; it is a process of connecting different contexts. It bridges traditional and contemporary forms, links designers with manufacturers, and weaves together use and meaning. More than designing an object, it reflects their ongoing exploration of shaping the relationships and narratives embedded within it.

Founded in Seoul by Hwahan Lee (b. 1995) and Yoomin Maeng (b. 1995), Kuo Duo is a creative studio working across three-dimensional design, focusing on products, furniture, and spaces. Grounded in industrial design and production, the studio extends its practice to limited editions, exhibitions, and spatial installations that test the boundaries between craft, industry, and culture. Lee, who spent his early years in Japan and later worked in Sweden, draws on cross-cultural experiences to observe how objects shape daily life and evolve within material and social systems. Maeng, whose perspective was influenced by her upbringing and periods in China and Denmark, explores design as a dialogue between culture, emotion, and everyday practice. Together, they approach each project through research, experimentation, and prototyping, emphasising process, context, and sensory experience to create designs that quietly articulate meaning in contemporary life.



Mario Tsai
蔡烈超 (CN)

-
Chopsticks
Maker
做筷子



Aluminium
L60XØ34 mm

‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.’ This philosophy of self-reliance and sustainable living, expressed by ancient Chinese through plain everyday insights, is the core origin of this creation. As a designer, exploring the essence of objects and conveying universal values is an instinct of design. When chopsticks come to mind, one naturally thinks of outdoor situations without disposable tableware. To equip people with the awareness and ability to ‘make chopsticks on their own’ is a modern interpretation of this traditional philosophy.

By reinterpreting and redesigning the pencil sharpener as a prototype, we have created a miniature, portable tool for making chopsticks. Moving beyond the one-dimensional logic of ‘providing ready-made utensils’, the tool enables self-sufficiency: in outdoor contexts, users can source materials locally—selecting safe twigs, thin bamboo, or other natural materials—and quickly remove the outer skin and sharp edges to form usable chopsticks. After use, the chopsticks can be cleaned and discarded. As the materials come from nature and return to nature, they leave no environmental burden, embodying a minimalist, sustainable approach to use. This chopstick-making tool is not a simple replacement for tableware, but a tangible, contemporary expression of the principle of ‘teach a man to fish’.



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@mariotsai_studio

Mario Tsai (b. 1988) is a product designer and the founder of Mario Tsai Studio and the design brand Mario Tsai. After establishing his independent practice in Hangzhou in 2014, he guided its evolution from a design-service-oriented entity to a self-driven, research-focused studio, launching the eponymous brand in 2019. Grounded in innovative thinking and a commitment to sustainable design, Mario Tsai Studio operates across products, installations, strategies, and exhibitions, combining rigorous logic with an intuitive sense of artistry. Unbounded by conventional methods, the practice collaborates across industries and cultures, addressing design as an open system of possibilities. Tsai himself transcends the singular label of “designer”, spanning design, art, research and development, production, and commerce. Through a four-step process—formulating questions, intuitive judgment, developing methodologies, and establishing systems—he approaches innovation with precision, openness, and efficiency.

Mario Tsai (CN)



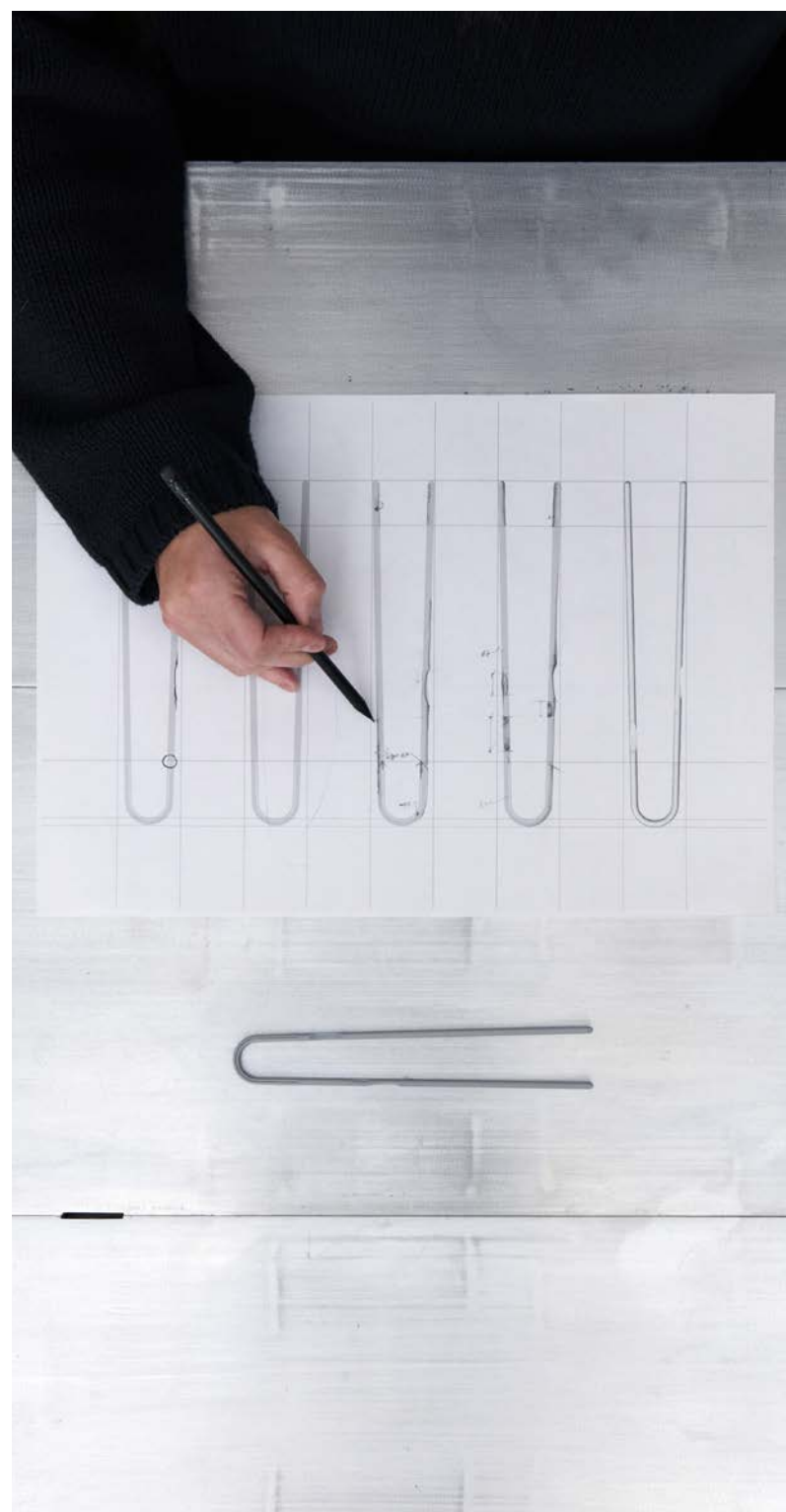
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CHOPSTICKS 箸

Niceworkshop - Engineered Chopsticks 工學筷子

'Engineered Chopsticks' reinterprets chopsticks through the lens of metal engineering, functioning as both a design object and a practical tool. Designed for Western users more familiar with forks, it allows chopsticks to be handled more intuitively without additional aids. Rather than consisting of two simple sticks, the piece adopts a plate-spring-like structure. Through wire cutting and precise heat treatment, carefully calibrated elasticity is integrated into the material itself—formed as a single continuous body instead of two separate elements, creating a natural opening and restoring force during use. This structure also defines finger placement, clarifying the grip and stabilising movement. It is not merely a formal gesture but a deliberate design of user behaviour, offering a clearer and more stable experience.

Stainless steel
Chopsticks: W37XDD203XH4 mm
Package: W45XDD225XH27 mm





Founded in Seoul by Hyunseog Oh (b. 1994) and Sangmyeong Yoo (b. 1997), Niceworkshop is a design studio inspired by construction sites and industrial processes. The studio engages in material-driven research that reconfigures industrial byproducts and building materials into objects, furniture, and spatial works. Oh, a designer whose practice is rooted in structural thinking and experimentation, explores how the physical and contextual qualities of materials can generate new structural and aesthetic logics. Yoo, a designer and business director, bridges design, production, and strategy by examining how design operates across industrial, environmental, and economic systems. Together, they seek to propose new design languages grounded in material life cycles, structural integrity, and social and environmental awareness.



Sae Honda 本多沙映 (JP)

-

Bridge 桥



Japanese cherry (sakura)
W230XD21XH23 mm

The exploration began at the designer's dining table. In searching for a chopstick rest aligned with personal sensibilities, no form fully resonated. A single pebble found on a beach served as a temporary solution, yet the search continued for something that could more precisely define the space. This inquiry led to the object's history: the earliest chopstick rest in Japan was a ritual tool for offerings to the gods, designed to support chopsticks at its centre, keeping them from touching the ground.

This form reinforces the Japanese tradition of horizontal alignment. Placing chopsticks parallel to the table edge creates a *kekkaï*—a deliberate spiritual and spatial boundary. A compelling theory suggests the Japanese word for chopsticks (*hashi*) derives from the word for bridge (*hashi*), reflecting the tool's dual nature: at rest, it marks a border, a sign of respect for the food; when lifted, it becomes a bridge connecting the self to the world.

The project reinterprets this ritual 'centre-support' through a contemporary formal inquiry, with Karimoku Furniture Inc. as production partner. By working with a furniture manufacturer rather than a specialised chopstick maker, it moves beyond the role of a utensil, positioning the object as a spatial element. A stable, centred structure allows chopsticks and rest to read as one, forming a quiet horizontal line that defines the space of a meal.



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@sae_honda_

Based in Japan, Sae Honda (b. 1987) graduated from Musashino Art University in 2010 before pursuing further studies in the Jewellery Department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, where she completed her degree in 2016. After several years in the Netherlands, she relocated her base to Japan in 2021. Her work spans self-initiated projects presented both domestically and internationally, as well as diverse collaborations with companies, educational institutions, and research organisations. With a poetic approach that questions existing systems of value, Honda explores alternative aesthetics emerging from contemporary life. Moving effortlessly between the realms of art, design, and craft, she delves into the hidden stories embedded in materials and objects through hands-on investigation. By giving physical form to these narratives, she reveals new and meaningful expressions of value. Her works are part of the permanent collections of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, and Museum Arnhem.

Sae Honda (JP)



We+ - Unbroken 不壊 (JP)



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Aspen wood and urushi
W11XH5XL203 mm

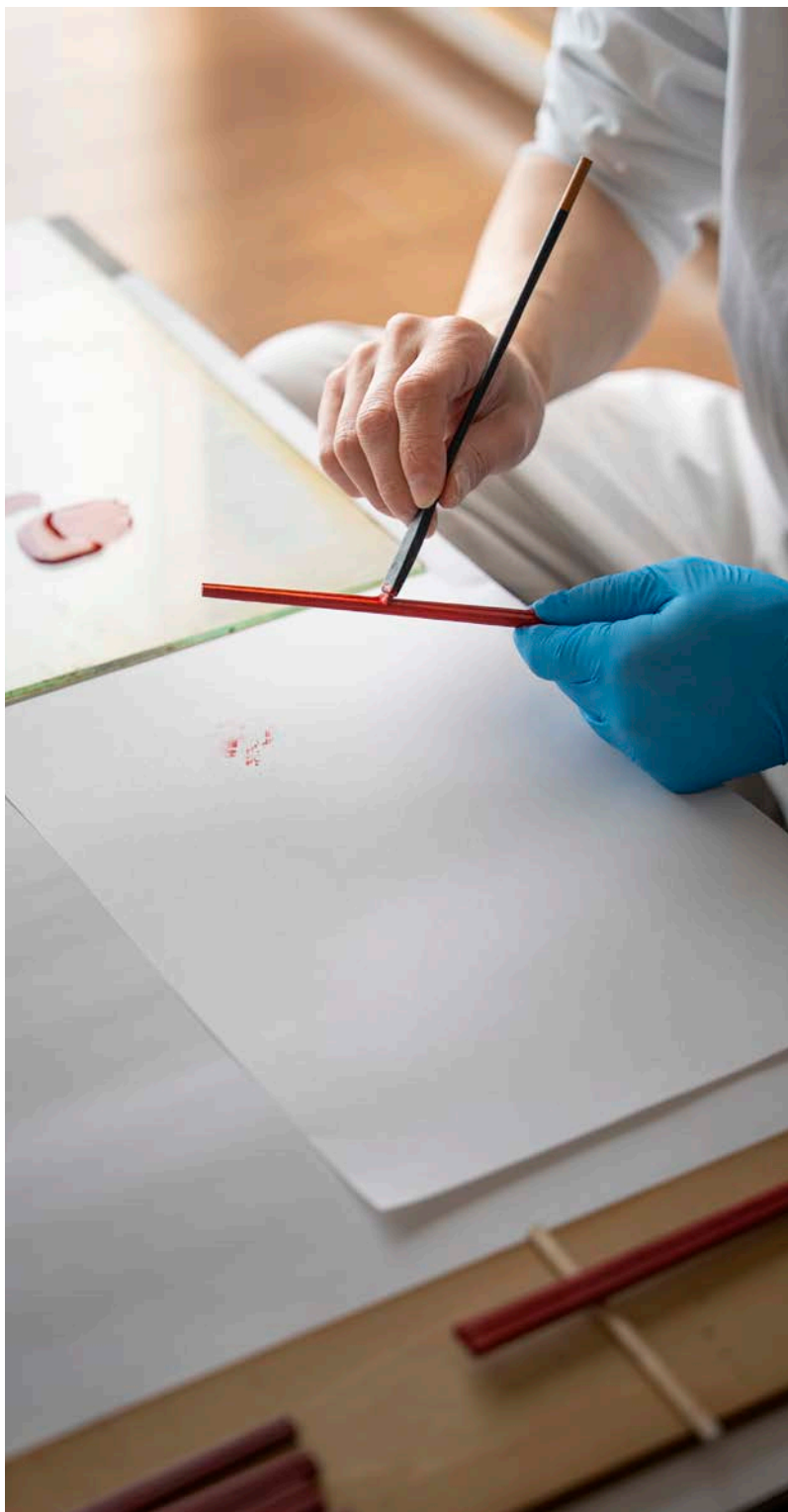
Chopsticks reached Japan from China during the Yayoi and Kofun periods, evolving in response to the country's climate and food culture. In a warm, humid environment rich in forests, lacquered chopsticks emerged through the repeated application of urushi onto wood. The coating provides water resistance and antibacterial qualities while extending the material's life. With a soft feel and gentle grip, they suit meals centred on rice, fish, and soups, and continue today as regional crafts such as Wakasa and Tsugaru lacquerware.

Disposable chopsticks tell another story. Emerging in the Edo period, they spread with the rise of eating out, valued for hygiene and convenience. Often made from offcuts and thinned timber, their single-use nature contrasts with lacquered chopsticks, which are made to last. This work brings these opposing forms together—permanence and disposability, care and convenience, preservation and consumption—merging them into a single object that reflects the contradictions embedded in Japanese material culture.

Disposable chopsticks only become usable once split apart. Here, lacquer is applied before that moment: when separated, the original disposable form appears from within. At the point they gain function, their crafted surface is broken. Through this simple act, the work quietly asks where value truly resides.

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CHOPSTICKS 箸



@weplus.jp

Founded in Tokyo in 2013 by Toshiya Hayashi (b. 1980, Toyama) and Hokuto Ando (b. 1982, Yamagata), the studio pursues research-driven and experimental approaches to design. Its work explores alternative forms of practice that foster coexistence between the natural and social environment, embracing diverse values often overlooked in a society driven by convenience and rationality. Comprising designers, engineers, researchers, and writers, the team develops self-initiated projects both in Japan and abroad, applying these insights to commissions in R&D, installations, branding, product development, spatial design, and art direction. Ongoing research initiatives—Nature Study, Urban Origin, and Hidden Layers—reframe relationships between nature, material, and production. The studio's work has been internationally recognised, receiving awards such as Designer of the Year (Frame Awards 2024) and Wallpaper* Design Awards 2023, and is held in the Vitra Design Museum collection.

We+ (JP)



AIM Architecture 恺慕建筑 设计 (BE)

Founded in Shanghai in 2005 by Belgian Wendy Saunders and Dutch Vincent de Graaf, AIM Architecture is a collective of international designers who approach cities with fresh eyes, creating community-centric projects that enhance urban vibrancy through hospitality, retail, cultural, and workplace environments. Saunders and de Graaf combine European precision with an intuitive, human-centred perspective shaped by decades in China's evolving urban landscape. Saunders draws inspiration from craftsmanship, material tactility, and urban life's sensory intensity, translating these into bold, playful spatial statements. De Graaf's approach, grounded in cultural awareness and refinement, explores emotional connections between people and place. Together, they craft architecture that balances vision and pragmatism—direct, optimistic, and built to inspire social connection.

S—3 Milan 2026

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Aoiro (JP)

'Itadakimasu' – 'I humbly receive' – may be spoken lightly or with quiet intention, by one voice or shared across a table. It expresses gratitude for the food and those who prepared it, bridging time and place to connect the many moments that shape the present. In saying it, one moves forward while holding onto memory. Composed for the 'CHOPSTICKS 箸' project, its scent pairs airy wood and mineral notes with ginger and Sichuan pepper, awakening the senses and encouraging curiosity, reflection, and new encounters through taste and experience.

Founded in Berlin by Shizuko Yoshikuni (b. 1980, Japan) and Manuel Kuschnig (b. 1980, Austria), Aoiro brings spatial atmospheres to life through a synaesthetic interpretation of scent. Blending Yoshikuni's background in aromatherapy and design with Kuschnig's studies in philosophy and Japanese aesthetics, the studio explores the intersection of olfaction, perception, and material space. Both shaped by international experiences—Yoshikuni between Japan, Switzerland, and Australia, and Kuschnig between Vienna and Tokyo—they approach scent as architecture for the air, crafting multi-sensorial environments that engage emotion and memory. Aoiro has created olfactive atmospheres for Herzog & de Meuron's Vitrahaus, Hotel Son de Mar in Corsica, and Hagius in Berlin, and developed scent concepts for brands including Land Rover and Ignant. Their own Hakudo collection extends this philosophy into everyday rituals of awareness and renewal.

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CHOPSTICKS 箸

S—3
COLLECTS-
First drop:
limited
edition
posters

#001

Yui Takada
高田唯 (JP)
-
Chopsticks
are Bridges
箸・橋

In Japanese, 'chopsticks' are pronounced hashi—the very same word as 'bridge'. The act of eating thus becomes a bridge that connects the blessings of life to one's own being.

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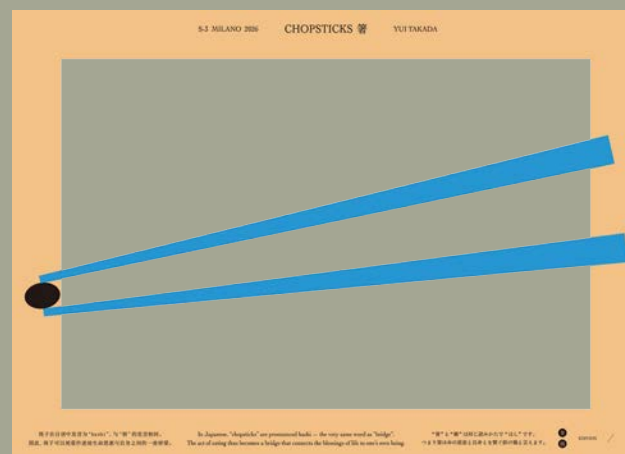
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@_yui_takada_

Limited edition of 150, numbered
Pantone offset print on paper
H500 x W700 mm

Yui Takada (b. 1980) is a graphic designer, artist, and director of Allright-Inc. Born in Tokyo, he graduated from Kuwasawa Design School before establishing Allright Graphics with Takada Nobukuni and Hojo Mai in 2006 and launching the letterpress printing studio Allright Printing in 2007. His accolades include the 2011 JAGDA New Design Award, 2019 Tokyo ADC Award, and 2020 Tokyo TDC Award, along with selection for AGI in 2019; he has held solo exhibitions in Tokyo, Taiwan (Taipei, Taichung), and China (Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu), and serves as a professor at Tokyo Zokei University.

Yui Takada (JP)



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CHOPSTICKS 箸

#002

Sun Yao
孙尧 (CN)

-
Kuài / Hashi /
Jeotgarak
筷箸젓

This poster focuses on chopsticks and begins with their different names in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean: Kuài / Hashi / Jeotgarak. Although they are the same object, chopsticks carry different meanings in different cultures. They reflect not only eating habits, but also table manners and ways of communication. The work sees the opening and closing of chopsticks as a metaphor for a mouth moving while speaking. In this way, chopsticks are linked not only to eating, but also to talking, becoming a symbol of interaction at the table. These different forms of interaction also correspond to the food cultures of the three countries. Conversation at a Chinese table is often lively and expressive, much like the rich and intense flavours of Chinese food. At a Japanese table, conversation is usually softer and quieter, reflecting the light and delicate qualities of Japanese cuisine. At a Korean table, interaction often feels more direct and connected, showing a stronger sense of participation and relationship. Visually, the poster does not show realistic chopsticks. Instead, it combines the shape and movement of chopsticks with the structure of the three writing systems. Through this, the poster shows how the same everyday object can create different rhythms of communication in East Asian cultures.

@sunyao_design

Sun Yao (b. 1997), a graphic designer from China currently based in Seoul, is pursuing a PhD in Design at Seoul National University after completing a Master's in Visual Design at Hongik University. Their practice explores visual perception and reading experiences within multilingual contexts, investigating typographic and graphic strategies for information transmission. By examining the tensions between rationality and sensibility in daily life, Sun critically reconsiders the boundaries of modernist design and its relationship between form, content, and context.

Sun Yao (CN)

Limited edition of 150, numbered
Offset print on paper, silver foil
W500 × H700 mm



筷 & 箸 & 箸 孙尧 / 孙尧 / 孙尧

S—3 MILANO 2026 CHOPSTICKS 箸 SUNYAO EDITION /

#003

Shin Shin 申申 (KR)

Seeking Creativity in Everyday Chopsticks Use 在日常使用筷子的 过程中发掘创意

Chopsticks are a quintessential utensil made from materials such as metal or wood, and have been used throughout Asia for a long time. While conceptualising this poster, we were reminded that chopsticks have served a variety of functions beyond simply picking up food, including as batons, drumsticks, weapons, hairpins, and more. Chopsticks consist of two long, straight lines, which can be considered one of the most abstract forms among human-made tools. Perhaps this is why people continue to imbue them with new possibilities. Viewing objects through a critical lens allows for a deeper exploration of their essence; Seeking Comfort in an Uncomfortable Chair by the renowned Milan-born Italian designer Bruno Munari can be understood as emerging in a similar vein. Using his poster as a canvas, we aim to gather various examples of chopstick usage and introduce the many possibilities.

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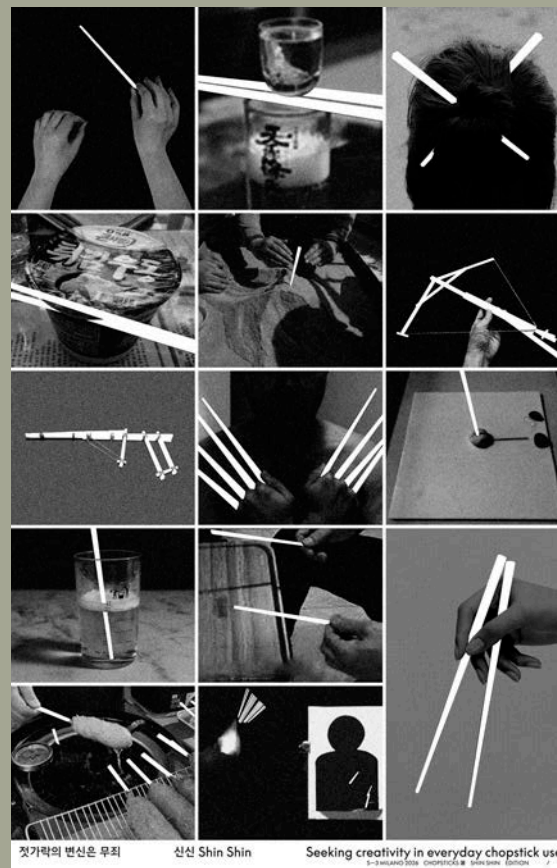
56

@shin_of_shinshin

Limited edition of 150, numbered
Offset print on paper
W500 × H700 mm

Shin Shin is a Seoul-based graphic design studio formed by Shin Haeok (b. 1985) and Shin Donghyeok (b. 1984). Haeok is interested in interweaving and threading texts, images, and pages within a book's structure, focusing on the observed relationships among them, while Donghyeok contemplates renewing the history, styles, conventions, traditions, and theory of graphic design in the context of 'here, now'. They have worked together in art and culture since 2008, collaborating with curators, editors, artists, and institutions while pursuing self-initiated projects, participating in exhibitions, teaching at universities, and synchronising their interests with students. In 2020, they established their own publisher, Hwawon—an imprint of Mediabus—to focus on the performative aspect of design practice where methodology crystallises into the structure and materiality of an object.

Shin Shin (KR)



젓가락의 변신은 무죄

신신 Shin Shin

Seeking creativity in everyday chopstick use

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CHOPSTICKS 箸

S—3 SELECTS

- Objects from East Asia and beyond

S—3 Selects exists both within the exhibition and as an ongoing pop-up selection of brands and companies that S—3 values. It brings together partners whose design and commercial philosophies align with S—3's approach, reflecting a shared interest in how design operates across cultural and everyday contexts. Rather than a fixed list, it is a continuously evolving selection, presenting products and practices that demonstrate clarity of vision, relevance, and resonance for an international audience.

@agar_archive

Agar Archive (CN)

Agar Archive is a cross-disciplinary practice that draws design cues from diverse narrative texts to create works shaped through everyday use. It seeks to release relationships between people and objects into a broader context through poetic, generative forms. Embracing uncertainty, it invites renewed awareness of the world's richness, fostering a fluid perspective that reconsiders the connections between self, objects, and the wider environment with clarity and sensitivity.

Agar Archive, Alongu with Jin Kuramoto

@alongu.jp

Alongu, (JP) Jin Kuramoto 明論具, 倉本仁

Alongu is a tableware brand inspired by the evolution of Japanese cuisine, shaped by cultural exchange and reinterpretation. Designed by Jin Kuramoto, the collection includes plates, bowls and vessels with considered forms that support diverse culinary styles. Rooted in Hasami's community-led traditions, it emphasises reduced waste and careful production, reflecting a continued exploration of tableware attuned to contemporary life and future possibilities.

Ambientec, Kensaku (JP) Oshiro 大城健作

Ambientec is a Japanese lighting brand founded in 2009, specialising in portable, rechargeable and waterproof lamps. Combining advanced LED technology with refined materials, its designs balance durability with clarity, crafted with precise workmanship. Among its pieces, Fotica by Kensaku Oshiro draws on the play of sunlight within the ocean's photic zone, using a machined aluminium body and a custom lens to cast a soft, atmospheric glow.

Aoiro (JP)

Aoiro is an olfactory design studio founded by Austro-Japanese duo Shizuko Yoshikuni and Manuel Kuschig. It develops tailored signature scents and spatial 'air design', translating concepts into sensory identities. Its process combines artistic exploration with the therapeutic qualities of botanical essences, beginning with in-depth analysis. Based in Berlin and Tokyo, Aoiro works internationally, shaping atmospheres as emotional qualities and crafting distinctive, communicative encounters through scent.

Bai Tu Bai Wu 百土百物 (CN)

Bai Tu Bai Wu is a ceramic tableware brand founded in 2024, aiming to integrate practical, well-crafted objects into contemporary daily life. 'Clay' refers both to the raw material of ceramics and to the soils of different regions. The brand draws on the material qualities and technical strengths of various ceramic-producing areas to express local cultural traditions and craft practices, offering an everyday aesthetic experience. It works with diverse Chinese clays to create a wide range of ceramic forms.

Basao 佰朔 (CN)

Basao captures tea aromas, seasonal fragrances, tradition and nature, creating a mindful experience that awakens the senses and nourishes the soul. Rooted in tradition yet open to innovation, it reinterprets classical tea practices in contemporary forms. In a fast-paced world, Basao fosters calm and presence through organic teas. Its community spans diverse disciplines, united by responsible sourcing and a shared commitment to deepening understanding of tea culture.

Dou6 Geoi6 So2 道具所 (HK,CN)

Chow Man is a product designer who graduated in 2014 and has worked across product and interior design. In 2017, she founded the studio Dou6 Geoi6 So2, where she explores woodworking and creates everyday objects. Her Shaker Box series marked a key moment in her practice, beginning from fascination and hands-on experimentation, followed by research into its history and global making techniques, and developed through five years of accumulated skills applied to the series.

Glass Talking 玻心璃語 (CN)

Glass Talking is an experimental glass design brand founded at the Shanghai Museum of Glass. Guided by a pioneering and multidisciplinary approach, it explores glass as a medium for contemporary life. Independent, focused and refined, the brand integrates glass into modern living through carefully crafted objects that express artistic and practical value. Working with designers and artists, it is committed to high-quality craftsmanship and to revealing the material's infinite creative possibilities.

Ishinomaki Laboratory, Keiji Ashizawa 石巻工房・ 芦沢啓治

Ishinomaki Laboratory was founded in 2011 in Ishinomaki, Japan, by architect Keiji Ashizawa and collaborators as a post-disaster community workshop following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Initially created to support local residents with tools and materials to rebuild homes and businesses, it began as a grassroots recovery initiative. It has since evolved into an internationally recognised furniture brand focused on 'Maker Made' designs, emphasising simple, locally assembled objects that support community recovery.

Lars Müller Publishers, (CH) Big-Game

The book Big-Game: Everyday Objects Industrial Design Works presents fifteen years of work by the Swiss design studio on everyday objects, from supermarket wine bottles to MoMA-collection chairs, airline cutlery to IKEA furniture. Combining anecdotes, diagrams and images, it reflects their playful, direct approach to industrial design. With texts by design critic Anniina Koivu and curator Susanne Hilpert Stuber, it situates the studio within contemporary Swiss and international design contexts.

Matsu-Cha (JP)

Nestled in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Matsu-Cha is a Japanese teahouse founded by two tea enthusiasts. Sourcing directly from award-winning producers, it curates a selection of fine Japanese teas that highlight regional, cultivar and processing differences. Celebrating the versatility of Japanese tea, MATSU-CHA explores both traditional preparation and contemporary uses in mocktails, baking and cooking. It aims to present innovative and engaging ways to experience Japanese tea beyond tradition.

Teawith 汀家 (CN)

Teawith, founded in 2014, explores the essential needs and quiet beauty of everyday life, creating long-lasting, companionable products. Responding to changing lifestyles, its Teawith Kettle reinterprets the electric kettle, bridging slower living and fast-paced urban contexts. Combining Far Eastern tea culture with Western design cues, it features a balanced form, ergonomic handle and precise spout. Teawith serves users in over 20 countries, including luxury hotels such as Bulgari, Aman and Mandarin Oriental.

Open Object (CN)

Established in 2017, Open Object is a design-focused ceramic brand based in China. It reinterprets 'Chinese ceramics' by integrating modernist design principles with meticulous craftsmanship, seeking the abstract quality of simple forms and the timeless beauty of balanced proportions. Based in Hangzhou with production in Jingdezhen, the 'Porcelain Capital' of China, it reflects an approach of sober luxury and high-level craft. The brand was a shortlisted finalist for the 2019 Loewe Foundation Craft Prize.

S—3

-

Sinosphere Stories Synergy

Based in Shanghai, S—3 positions itself as a distinctive force elevating Sinosphere design and fostering global collaboration. S—3 stands for Sinosphere, Stories, and Synergy—a triad that captures our spirit: Sinosphere, our cultural and historical sphere, represents energy, ambition, and the convergence of diverse traditions and modernity; Stories reflect our commitment to narrative-driven design, where every idea carries meaning and every project has something to say; Synergy speaks to the collaborative power that fuels us—between disciplines, generations, and perspectives—creating outcomes greater than the sum of their parts.

S—3 is an integrated creative platform and agency, co-founded by Cultural Associates and MANIFESTO, dedicated to elevating Sinosphere design and fostering international collaboration. Founded in 2025, S—3 operates at the intersection of agency services (S—3 Bureau), a dynamic digital platform (S—3 Portal), and global events (S—3 Circuit), elevating regional voices to international prominence and influence.

A platform connecting East Asian design to global ideas and practices

@cultural.associates
@manifestofair

Cultural Associates is an international consultancy working across art, design, lifestyle, and cultural strategy. Founded by Yoko Choy, it delivers curatorial projects, commissions, and advisory services for institutions, galleries, brands, and the hospitality and interior design sectors. Bridging Eastern and Western perspectives, it translates cultural insight into practical frameworks that foster dialogue and collaboration. It plays a role in shaping international conversations around contemporary and collectible design.

MANIFESTO bridges global design and local culture through exhibitions, collaborations, and storytelling. In partnership with Shanghai Fashion Week, it brings together a global community of brands, designers, artists, and media. Through curated exhibitions and events, it acts as a catalyst, supporting emerging talent, advancing new thinking, and testing ideas. This ongoing cycle of exchange and experimentation produces innovative design solutions and positions MANIFESTO at the intersection of practice, craft, and business.

Chenfeng Group 晨风集团

Founded in 1967 and originally producing silk garments, Chenfeng Group has grown into a major apparel manufacturer guided by group-scale operations, large-scale production and international development. It operates advanced production lines, producing around 60 million garments annually. The group runs five garment bases in Jintan, Kunshan, Suqian, Sihong and Siyang, and two fabric bases in Changshu and Suqian, with around 16,000 employees. Its mid- to high-end products are exported to over 20 countries, including Japan and Europe.

Credits

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S—3 Milan 2026

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