

PIET HEIN EEK

SALONE 2010

The products we will be presenting this year come mostly from our collection, although there will also be a number of items I have designed for other companies. These products were conceived and developed during a financial crisis that, fortunately, has largely passed us by, and during a period in which we entered into our biggest project ever. We bought an old ceramics factory, 10,000 m² in size, where we plan to fulfil all our dreams (or experience our worst nightmare...). All of our efforts seem to pay off in the end and are worth every moment, but in order to better display this presentation and perhaps earlier works as well, we've also made a sort of newspaper, in which we describe what we plan to do with the new building



Crisis 2009

The initial impetus for this furniture was given when I was asked to design the interior for the Design Academy Graduation Show, a kind of exhibition presentation but with a limited budget. We figured the same building system should be suitable for future use. When, a few months later, we were asked to design the interior of the Glass Museum in Leerdam, which also had a very limited budget, I figured we could use the same simple approach. The chairs, tables, cabinets, display cases and counters were even simpler than the Crisis furniture I designed in 2003. Back then, we called it the Crisis furniture line because it was so inexpensive, could be carried in a bag, and because we wanted to put into perspective all the complaining that was going on during a time of prosperity. Now that we are once again experiencing a crisis, this time more serious but still during a period of relative prosperity, the designs are even simpler and more affordable. They were not developed as a result of the crisis, but have been named after it nonetheless.









The poor man's silver lamp
(in collaboration with the Glass Museum)

Guido Geelen, a friend, artist and frequent collaboration partner, came up with the idea to create a Christmas tree with crib hanging upside down in the tree. The crib was made of silver-plated blown glass, also called the poor man's silver. I was working on the interior of the Glass Museum in Leerdam at the time and still needed lamps. And, just like that, our lamp problem was resolved! These are the first blown objects developed, produced and marketed together with the museum.









Glim chair, bucket seat, armchair and sofa

The basis of this design was the method used to attach the upholstery to the metal frame. By using a clamping system in which the leather is pushed over the edge into a groove, a transition from steel to leather is created that is beautiful and can be easily realised. The shiny stainless steel is nickel-plated, which was reason enough to breathe new life into the Glim armchair, since this chair has been extremely difficult to produce in the past. The chair was originally made of polished aluminium and it was a devil of a job to polish, but the result was gorgeous, although, unfortunately, the surface turned out to be extremely fragile. The solution? Nickel plating the stainless steel!







Spotlights

These past few months, a huge amount of publicity has been generated about the tree trunk hut, a huge pile of wood in a pasture at the edge of the woods that is actually a little house. The pictures Thomas Mayer took of the hut have made their way around the world, a remarkable experience for both of us, just when we thought we had seen it all. Presenting the work in a different context seems to appeal to a different and surprisingly large target group. We were unable to find suitable lamps for the interior, so we made them ourselves. I wanted a simple spotlight. Not one of those round built-in numbers stashed away in a dark hole, but something that attracts attention, something premeditated, fun, logical, yet not a work of art, simply a sort of container against the ceiling or wall, nothing special.





Old lampshade lamps

As long as I have known her, my wife Jeanine has been collecting lampshades for some future purpose. Needless to say, we have quite a few stored away. When I visited Leo Coolen (Sprookjes NV), who will be collaborating with us in the new building, it turned out he too has a collection of lamps, the size of which is absolutely beyond imagination. Collections that are apparently without end yet unique always tend to excite me and I could not stop thinking about all those lamps, not only because this is our first joint project, but also because many more are sure to follow in the new building.












Two-door scrap cabinet

A cabinet created in the same way the very first model in scrap wood was, finished with dark, high-gloss paint.



RK tables

The collection already includes a canteen and office table, both were designed for use in our current building. The RK table was designed as an office table for the new building. It is produced in the same way as the inside of the canteen table but, instead of covering the whole thing, there are solid wooden mouldings around the edges. The solid pinewood strips we used to finish the sides are scrap from our other scrap wood products.



Jeanine's green dishes

The dishes were originally designed for the Windmill and annexes that we literally resurrected from the ashes in recent years. They are in perfect keeping with the rough atmosphere evoked by natural stone, concrete and oak. Since we plan to rent out the houses, we want to be able to replace pieces in case something breaks. The dishes are comprised of all kinds of different pieces rummaged together from flea markets. Glazing all of the elements in one colour brings unity to this motley collection. On closer examination, you can see an exciting combination of shapes, details, patterns and sizes.





Tile cabinets

The tile cabinets commissioned by Roberto Polo are finished. This assignment not only breathed new life into the project that Jeanine and I completed in 1992, but also into our collaboration. The new cabinets, produced 18 years later, are not only a continuation of the original project, but also reflect our current phase. The development we have undergone can be clearly seen in both the design and finished product. Although the different details used are simple, the sum of the total is a sort of puzzle for the advanced. The cabinets have been made in editions of three: three in metal and three in wood.

Baskets and vases for Fair Trade Original

I designed a number of wooden baskets and ceramic vases for Fair Trade Original and travelled to Vietnam to have the first models made there. Since it turned out to be nearly impossible to make products that would not break due to the difference in humidity levels, I came up with the idea to have strips of wood bound together with netting twine to create the pieces.



The idea for the vases was to make one that could be used for various types of bouquets. The size of the vase can be adjusted by placing or removing rings. To be on the safe side, we had three vases made in different sizes. The designs are based on traditional decorations, but then applied in a whole new way.



White cups for Douwe Egberts (Sara Lee)

Cups designed for Douwe Egberts made of delicate china-ware. We deliberately chose a modern-classic cup design in order to explore and push back the boundaries of the DE collection.



Delftware dishes. The models were specifically designed for the decoration used. Delftware is a traditional Dutch trademark, just like Douwe Egberts. But to make a set of traditional blue dishes did not seem worthwhile and was adverse to our desire to appeal to a broader and, especially, younger and more modern audience. Delft blue it was. The patterns look traditional from a distance but, on closer examination, it is clear that the images are made up of a chaotic accumulation of existing pictures.

