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WEDNESDAY. 07/04/21

# Monocle Minute
# On Design

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01/07

COMMENT / NOLAN GILES

## Ad taste

Enjoying the glossy pages of our sister publication *Konfekt*'s second issue, which hits newsstands tomorrow, I was struck by the advertising creativity being deployed by the art directors of many of the design industry's biggest names. While fashion brands tend to treat the display ad as a work of art, the furniture industry is more inclined to play it safe on-page; the usual approach is to show a comfy couch in a stylish setting, shot in a lovely light.

Experimental marketing tends to be left to the industry's biggest annual event, Salone del Mobile, where a year's worth of brainstorming, idea-hatching and collaborations come to fruition in engaging physical activations across Milan. Yet with no Salone in 2020, it's clear that the creativity that usually goes into making an impact at this event has instead been channelled into beautiful brand revamps and advertising campaigns that engage across all touchpoints of marketing.

The results in print are compelling. String shelving being unearthed on an archaeological site with “configurations yet to be discovered” and Kartell by Laufen sinks slung stylishly across the bodies of models, in a campaign reminiscent of classic Calvin Klein, were two of multiple industry efforts that raised a smile in my Easter reading.

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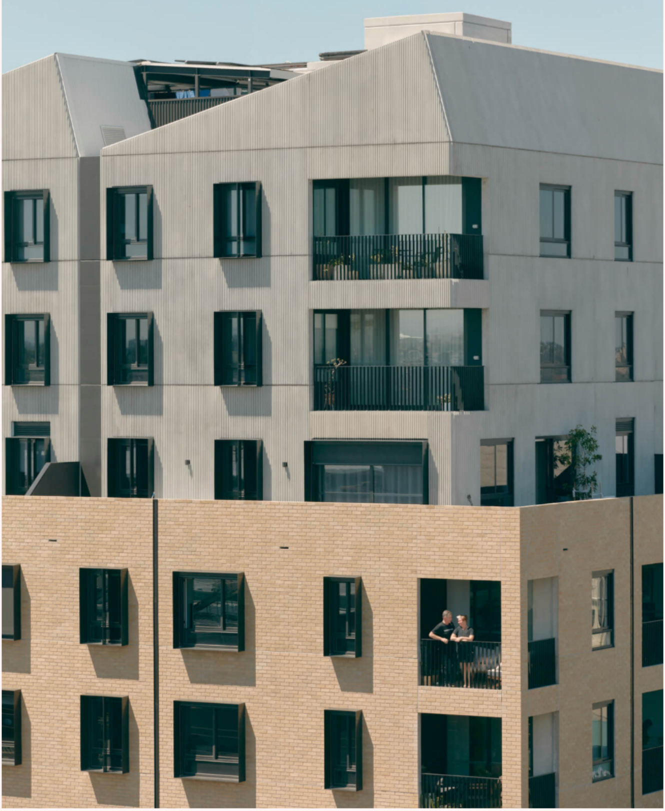
02/07

THE PROJECT / BREESE STREET, MELBOURNE

## In its elements

For global benchmarks in interesting and innovative residential property development, look to Melbourne. The latest success story here is Breese Street, a just-completed apartment block from developer Milieu, designed by Melbourne architecture firms DKO and Breathe Architecture. It’s a breezy building in the suburb of Brunswick that has been strategically placed to aid cross-ventilation.



Through the addition of quality glazing and trees planted to create shading, the architects have made this building thermally efficient, cutting the costs and pollution associated with typical Aussie air-conditioned apartment blocks. Residents also enjoy a shared rooftop garden and views over their post-industrial neighbourhood. The vernacular of these streets is referenced in the apartments' fine architecture, capped off with factory-style sawtooth roofing and characterful brickwork across the façades.

*milieuproperty.com.au*

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03/07

DESIGN FINDS / HIGHCOLLAR OUTDOOR FURNITURE

# Outside bet

Established Tokyo-based design duo Drill Design has collaborated with Japanese steel company Iguchi Sangyo to launch Highcollar, a new outdoor-furniture brand, just in time for the nation's warmer months. "There aren't many outdoor-furniture brands in Japan, so it was a good opportunity for us to create work of multiple sizes that suit any household," says Drill Design's Yusuke Hayashi (*pictured, on left, with colleague Yoko Yasunishi at a launch exhibition for the furniture in Tokyo*) of the steel and pine pieces, which take the natural world and its many landscapes as inspiration.

highcollar

Of the three new releases – Pool, Terrace and Cascade – we are particularly enamoured with the Terrace model (*pictured, top*), with its angular form rising up and down like a rugged mountain landscape. It can rest against a wall for use in narrow areas or stand independently on a balcony. Either way, its appealing powder-coated pale green frame and light pine top make it an eye-catching addition. *highcollar.tokyo*

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Hot air
145°C
Stop
Operating time: 2min 20s

## Fine line

V-Zug's new Excellence Line appliances are designed to fit seamlessly into modern kitchens and to empower those operating them. The handsome range draws on the function-first ethos and practical engineering mindset that reigns at V-Zug's base in Switzerland, where all of its products are manufactured. The innovative results are quality appliances with longevity in colours, finishes and textures that fit perfectly in kitchens of all styles around the world.

**Find the one for you**

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04/07

WORDS WITH... / CHATPONG CHUENRUDEEMOL, BANGKOK

# Inner beauty

After completing his master's degree at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in 2000 and a short stint working in the US, Thai-born architect Chatpong Chuenrudeemol moved back to Bangkok. There he set up Bangkok Architectural Research to investigate built-environment issues in the Thai capital, before establishing his own research-based studio Chat Architects in 2012. Here, Chuenrudeemol explains how conservation feeds into his work and what architectural preservation is really about.

**Is architectural conservation just about protecting buildings or is there a cultural and living element too?**
When you talk about traditional preservation, to me, it's about freezing an artefact in time without really looking at the life that goes on inside of that particular building or house now. If the life that

used to exist in that house or building no longer exists, and we just preserve the shell, I feel like the value of that particular architecture is critically lessened. Architecture has meaning when it's used or occupied, whether it's old or new. An old building that has somehow managed to transform or adapt itself to a current daily activity and still has a place in living society – that's when preservation and conservation is at its best.

**So how do you strike that balance in your work in Bangkok, where older buildings might be functional but not beautiful?**
I'm drawn to dilapidated, ugly, seemingly valueless structures, rather than fighting for these beautiful historical structures. I feel like there's more volume in the not-so-attractive structures, which often have a lot of functional use too. So that's where my agenda is; I feel that I can have more impact improving the city by upcycling these mundane structures – looking at the large-scale picture rather than at the static, romantic picture of conservation. For me, it's not really about looking at the aesthetic of the thing I'm preserving but actually its functionality and how it can have an impact on decreasing overall construction in Bangkok's untamed urbanism.

**How do you get developers and investors to come on board with such an approach?**
In order to create an awareness and recognition of value, there needs to be research and an unearthing of everyday things around us. It's the task of designers to not just come up with new designs but actually unearth value in things around us. This will not only help in terms of sustainability and conservation but it will also make better designers because they will have original content that's locally sourced and locally based, from which they can create something innovative.

*To hear the full interview, listen to this week's edition of 'Monocle on Design' on Monocle 24.*

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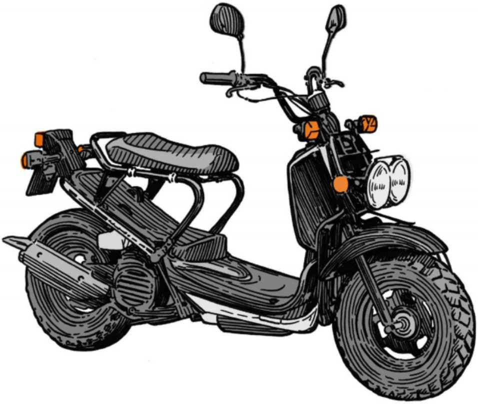
05/07

FROM THE ARCHIVE / HONDA ZOOMER, JAPAN

# One for the road

Although we tend to associate Italian scooter culture with the nation’s famous Piaggio and Vespa brands, on our last trip to Milan we learned of a love for a two-wheeler from more distant shores. Monocle’s agent in Milan, Valentina Donini, zips about to meetings on a Honda Zoomer, a characterful scooter that the Japanese motor giants brought to market in 2001. She’s not alone in her appreciation for this cheerily designed ride either, as the vintage number enjoys a cult following with cool Milanese.

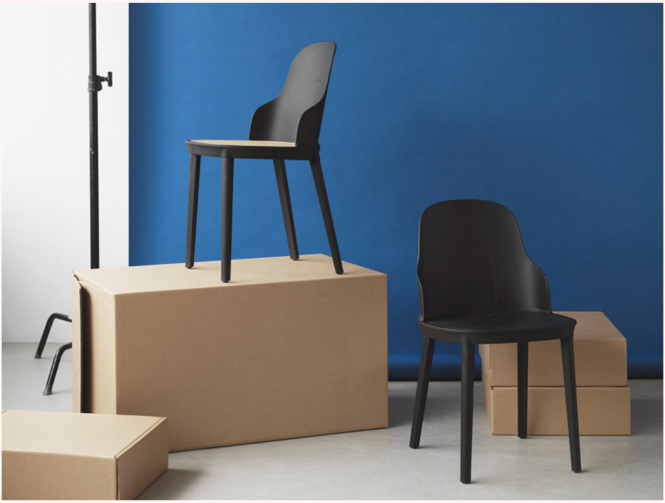


Beyond its endearing name, the Zoomer is the perfect vehicle on which to cruise through a crowded Italian city. Why? First (and most important), it looks good. Its oversized headlights have something very Jeep-like about them, while the overall form blurs military-style function with *kawaii* charm. And, practically speaking, the frame’s sparse construction means that there’s a tonne of storage space, while the bike’s little engine is utterly efficient. Although Honda’s current crop of scooters are sporty and practical, they’re also bland – so it’s time to bring back the Zoomer.

AROUND THE HOUSE / ALLEZ, NORMANN COPENHAGEN

# Terrace culture

Designed by young Danish talent Simon Legald for Normann Copenhagen, the new Allez chair fills a gap in the market for easily transportable outdoor seating. Although it's actually suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, we see it as a smart option for café owners who want to swiftly (and beautifully) make the most of their terraces this spring.



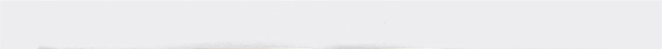
Aesthetically, it's perfect: its form takes a pared-back approach to interpreting the elegant chairs that popped up in France during the rise of outdoor bistro culture in the late 19th century. It's also a hugely functional piece, drawing on “knock-down” design principles in its creation. Allez comes in separate components and is delivered flat-packed, making it quick and affordable to ship, and to pack down and store efficiently when winter comes.
*normann-copenhagen.com*

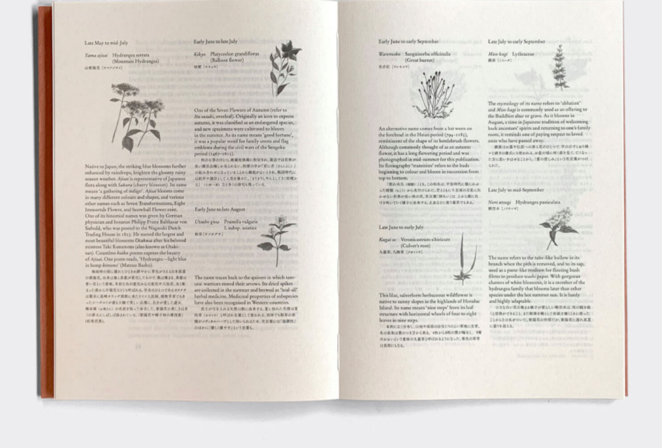
IN THE PICTURE / INAGAWA CEMETERY

# All things considered

As an architect who's all about attention to detail, David Chipperfield's latest book is one that honours his firm's thoughtful approach. It details the creation of a chapel and visitor centre at Inagawa Cemetery, designed by John Morgan studio and produced by Japan's Boenfukyukai Foundation in collaboration with Chipperfield's Berlin-based architecture firm.

Inagawa Cemetery Chapel and Visitor Centre
猪名川霊園 礼拝堂・休憩棟
デイヴィッド チッパーフィールド アーキテクツ
David Chipperfield Architects





Late May to mid-July

*Yama ajisai* Hydrangea serrata (Mountain Hydrangea)

Native to Japan, the striking blue blossoms further enhanced by raindrops, brighten the gloomy rainy season weather. *Ajisai* is representative of Japanese flora along with *Sakura* (cherry blossom). Its name means 'a gathering of indigo'. *Ajisai* blooms come in many different colours and shapes, and various other names such as Seven Transformations, Eight Immortals Flower, and Snowball Flower exist. One of its binomial names was given by German physician and botanist Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold, who was posted to the Nagasaki Dutch Trading House in 1823. He named the largest and most beautiful blossoms *Otakusa* after his beloved mistress Taki Kusumoto (also known as Otaki-san). Countless *haiku* poems express the beauty of *Ajisai*. One poem reads, 'Hydrangea—light blue in hemp *kimono*' (Matsuo Basho).

Early June to late July

*Kikyo* Platycodon grandifloras (Balloon flower)

One of the Seven Flowers of Autumn (refer to *Ito susuki*, overleaf). Originally an icon to express autumn, it was classified as an endangered species, and new specimens were cultivated to bloom in the summer. As its name means 'good fortune', it was a popular motif for family crests and flag emblems during the civil wars of the Sengoku period (1467–1615).

Early June to late August

*Utsubo gusa* Prunella vulgaris L. subsp. asiatica

The name traces back to the quivers in which samurai warriors stored their arrows. Its dried spikes are collected in the summer and brewed as 'heal-all' herbal medicine. Medicinal properties of subspecies have also been recognised in Western countries.

Early June to early September

*Waremoko* Sanguisorba officinalis (Great burnet)

An alternative name comes from a hat worn on the forehead in the Heian period (794–1185), reminiscent of the shape of its bottlebrush flowers. Although commonly thought of as an autumn flower, it has a long flowering period and was photographed in mid-summer for this publication. Its floriography 'transition' refers to the buds beginning to colour and bloom in succession from top to bottom.

Late June to early July

*Kugai so* Veronicastrum sibiricum (Culver's root)

This lilac, salverform herbaceous wildflower is native to sunny slopes in the highlands of Honshu Island. Its name means 'nine steps' from its leaf structure with horizontal whorls of four to eight leaves in nine steps.

Late July to early September

*Miso hagi* Lythraceae

The etymology of its name refers to 'ablution' and *Miso hagi* is commonly used as an offering to the Buddhist altar or grave. As it blooms in August, a time in Japanese tradition of welcoming back ancestors' spirits and returning to one's family roots, it reminds one of paying respect to loved ones who have passed away.

Late July to mid-September

*Nori utsugi* Hydrangea paniculata

The name refers to the tube-like hollow in its branch when the pith is removed, and to its sap, used as a paste-like medium for floating bush fibres to produce *washi* paper. With gorgeous clusters of white blossoms, it is a member of the hydrangea family that blooms later than other species under the hot summer sun. It is hardy and highly adaptable.

Every element, from the book's *washi*-inspired Satogami paper stock to the finely sketched botanical-style drawings of the plants that grow at the cemetery space, is remarkably well thought out. Much more than an homage to the remarkable design project, it also provides a rich dialogue around architecture, art and the concept of patronage. This comes to life through a conversation between

photographer Thomas Struth, Chipperfield and Hideyuki Osawa, director of the Boenfukyukai Foundation.
*davidchipperfield.com*

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