

CRAFT

TRANSCENDENCE

文心造物 中国当代工艺

CHINESE
CONTEMPORARY
OBJECTS

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Foreword

The China Design Centre collaborated with Hundredicrafts and carefully selected 25 pieces of work by contemporary Chinese craft artists and designers to bring together the exhibition 'Craft transcendence: Chinese Contemporary Objects'; 7-11 September 2018 at Maison&Objet Paris.

This curated showcase is intended to capture the path of innovation within contemporary Chinese crafts. Showing different interpretations of traditional techniques and materials, while exploring the heritage and changing trends of crafts. The pieces within the exhibition embody the cultural heritage of Chinese lacquer making, bamboo weaving and unveil the exquisite craftsmanship used to create embroidery, ceramics, furniture with materials such as metal and wood. With core techniques that reach back centuries, it is interesting to consider how historical lacquer, ceramic or copper design techniques simultaneously fuse, inform and provide a point of friction within the artist's unique practice. Moreover, how do the designers react to the complexities and possibilities of these traditions today?

The exhibition also showcases how the talented designers revitalise old crafts and materials to inform contemporary aesthetics in their design works. The material helps the designer to transform their ideas, whilst bringing permanence and beauty, into a tangible object. Each nuance in design indicates the craftsmen's imagination, individuality, passion, knowledge and skill.

The participating artists and designers consist of a diverse group, ranging from young rising talents to established artists and brands, with educational backgrounds from all over the world. They take with them their cultural roots, with the methods and styles that they have learned along the way and created their very own unique design language. These talented designers have thrived and absorbed the experiences created by their origins and explorations, resulting in each one having their own highly personal design story that is distilled into the work itself.

Art, Craft and design as meaningful forms of artistic expression show the current cultural landscape. In this sense, the designers' craftsmanlike work, artistic finesse and technical prowess could inform a vision for our future. The celebration of contemporary craftsmanship will always be deeply rooted in the past, as it was informed by it. This means we can begin to have conversations about how contemporary craft and design inform our shared narrative and contribute to our cultural heritage in a meaningful way.

These innovative, individual, unique works come directly from the artists' studios, genuinely representing their original creative thinking and execution, as well as the artisanal excellence of their craft. In this collection you may find anything from exquisite collectables ranging to special and functional design products.

Orgnisers



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CONG MA

Cong Ma is the founder of Foryou Art & Design and Creative Director of Hundredicrafts. He was the first Chinese designer to be invited to have a solo exhibition during Milan Design Week at Milan Triennale Design Museum.

Water Rhyme is a series of screens with an abstract pattern of double-sided embroidery; the craft of Chinese intangible cultural heritage. The design that looks like flowing clouds or water waves has an elegant, yet powerful form. The juxtaposition between bare and packed imagery and the poetic beauty of the sun and moon gleaming gold and silver flows throughout the dazzling embroidery. Traditional Chinese wood furniture craft is also applied here, creating a fresh and modern interpretation of Chinese aesthetics.



Golden Faith
2018
330x217x4cm
Embroidery



ZHILONG ZHENG

Zheng studied architecture and environmental art. He started to collect old wood from demolished houses and he owned a collection of approximately 5 tons of used wood in the year of his graduation. Around 2013 he established his studio Shimuji, which focuses on the design and the customisation of log furniture. In 2017, his work 'Tree Chair' was one of the finalists of LOEWE Craft Prize.

Zheng uses the wood that people have abandoned and brings them a new lease of life. He insists on hand making and polishing, because he believes that the contact between skin and wood could reinvigorate the work created. 'Tree Chair' uses North American black walnut, birch tumour and hard maple. He balances the colour by adjusting the proportion of the size of different wood and retains the natural shade of the tree.



Tree Chair
46x46x73cm
North American black walnut,
birch tumor, hard maple

XIAODONG BIAN

Bian Studied a BA in Environmental Art Design at Wuchang Institute of Technology. Xiaodong Bian has established the Raindrop Ceramic Design Studio in Jingdezhen. His work; 'Raindrop' was collected by the Hong Kong Museum of Contemporary Art M+, and the work 'Cocoon' was acquired by the China Ceramic Museum.

The work uses fine eggshell porcelain to present the moment that a silkworm cocoon is emerging from the chrysalis. The folds and separation of the objects demonstrate the powerful force of metamorphosis. It praises the beauty of nature and also indicates that the restriction at a particular moment in life is the revelation for the next wonderful bloom.



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Cocoon
2018
30x30cm
Ceramic

YAOYAO XIN

Xin graduated from the Industrial Design Department at Jiangnan University; and has won the Product Design Award of IF and Red Dot. She has been experimenting by combining different techniques with ceramics.

In her Geometric series, a 3D printed model was turned into a plaster mould. Then through the hand-carving and polishing process geometric vessels appear with the characteristics of architectural and sculptural design. For the artist the texture of materials affects the colour. To adequately express the highly saturated blue colour the IKB Blue Porcelain series adapts matt glaze. This needs to be polished cleverly after the biscuit process. The vases from the Silver Glaze series are coated with silver powder on the surface of the fired vessel and fired again, then this process is repeated at least two more times until the ideal state is reached.

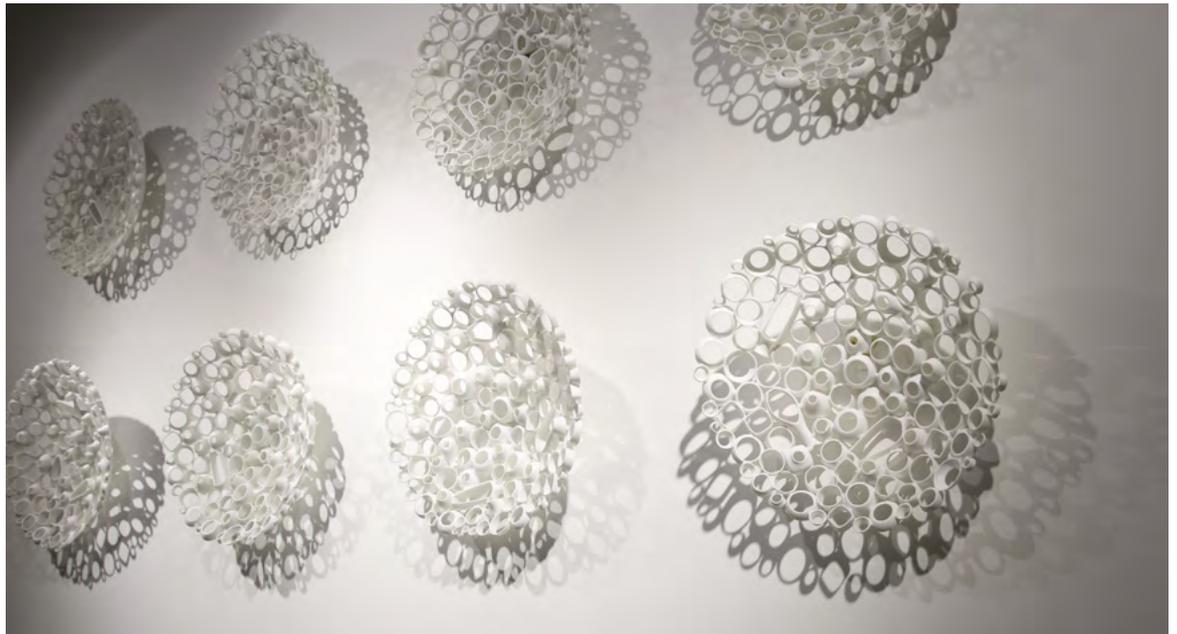
Geometric series
Large H33xD11 cm
Middle H34xD8.5cm
Ceramic



ZIANG ZHU

Ziang Zhu graduated in sculpture from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. The series "Cells" was created in 2012 and has been collected by Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute and Chinese Sculpture Museum.

'Cells' represents the cell-division process and development of traditional ceramic culture, exploring the possibility of innovating the form of visual language via conventional ceramic elements. The work tries to guide the audience to rethink the use of traditional ceramics values through the utensils. This makes use of the transformation of space and structure to change the existing ceramic products from everyday objects to artworks.



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Cell
2012
D40cm
Ceramic

LIYA WAN

Liya Wan graduated from a Chinese Naval Academy and while at sea he covered the walls of his ship's cabin with sheets of his calligraphy, selling his paper-cuts when back on land. After a work injury, he became an artist, working with a range of mediums from porcelain to oil paintings.

He plays with the prestige of Chinese ceramics in pieces such as "National Treasure"; an extravagantly large copy of an imperial vase that had been tucked away at the base of a table lamp in the house of an American diplomat until it was rediscovered in 2002 and put up for auction. Wan's giant interpretation of the piece was exhibited at the Hague Under Heaven contemporary Chinese sculpture show in 2011.



Happy Life
2016
41x41x61cm
Porcelain with transfer and gold

RUIQI DAI

A graduate from the University of the Arts London and the Royal College of Art; Dai's works use completely original, handmade, luxury objects to blend the lines between functional design and sculptural art. She intends to use design to connect the physical material with imaginary experiences, to provoke attention to our own psychological needs and to bring a sensual touch to the world we live in.

The designer is attracted by the texture and potential of ceramics in the "Golden Sky" Series. She specialises in the use of spray gun techniques, in which she uses rotation to express the contrast between light and dark, in order to capture the changing details of light and colour. The designer uses her ceramic works to create an eternal space and atmosphere that bring viewers into a fantastic dream.



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Golden Sky
2017
21x10cm
Ceramic



CHER YIN

Educated at the Central Saint Martins in ceramic design BA; Cher Yin is continuously questioning how to establish a bridge between different cultures by ceramic design.

She tried to answer the intriguing question, "what happens when Chinese Longquan celadon from the South Song dynasty meets the European design movement of Memphis?" in her design collection. She merges the two distinct styles, to create a series of vases with both ornamental and functional beauty. The concept of this artwork presents the conflict and coexistence of hybrid styles within design.



Memphis x Celadon
2018
Porcelain



CHENCHEN HU

Chenchen Hu obtained a BA degree in Product Design at China Central Academy of Fine Arts and an MA degree in Ceramic and Glass at the Royal College of Art. She explores the relationship between ceramic sculptures and functional objects. Creating work that can provide a chance for people to shift the role between viewer and uses. Doing this Hu has developed her own distinctive language in ceramic making.

In the "Half & Half" series, Hu has left the decisions for the audience to determine how to view or use an object. Through the unique design she intends to make the function of her work undecipherable, leaving room for the user to rethink the function and bring more potential to the piece. By presenting an uncompleted shape she wants to create an interdependent yet independent relationship within the work. All of the geometric shapes in this series are made by slip-casting earthenware.



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Half & Half
2018
16.5x18.5x14.5cm
Ceramic, Earthenware

FEI WU

After graduating from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (Beijing), Fei Wu has created ceramic works in Jingdezhen for five years, learned Yixing teapot making in Yixing for one year and studied ceramics at Alfred University, USA. By experiencing different cultures he deepens his understanding of pottery and materials. As a result of the impact of this cultural collision Wu tried to break the invisible boundaries in his mind and see his works as a product of the process of breaking and re-building self. He narrates through his work which often becomes a new imprint beyond himself.

The series 'Refluence' represents Wu's understanding of materials and pots at this stage. The artist used a stacking method to make the structural shape and combined the softness and hardness of the clay to form a nuanced sensory perception. The soda firing also better preserved the different states of the clay.

Refluence
2018
Ceramics



YUHUA LI

Yuhua Li studied at the Art and Design Department of Nanjing Art College, majoring in ceramics and art design. Then she received an MA at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute of Art.

'Gu'(觚) is a type of ritual vessel in ancient China. Confucius once used the words to complain about the collapse of the rituals of his time. Therefore, it also became a symbol of a society with propriety. For two thousand five hundred years the rituals have been extinct, but vessels remain with different shapes from these times. An artefact is a memory of a small world, and the 'Gu-Little World' series uses the form of Gu to express the artist's personal world.



'Gu' Little World
40x20x20cm,
30x20x15cm
Porcelain

YANZE JIANG

Jiang studied BA and MA in Ceramic Art at the Nanjing University of the Arts and Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute; Yanze Jiang won the Sidney Myer Fund Premier Award at the Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria, Australia.

In her work, Yanze Jiang is interested in the relationship between industrial production and human ritual gestures. She started making interlinked pieces after a kiln incident accidentally fused a stack of different vessels together. Her assemblages often use discards and remains of her designs. Yanze Jiang enjoys manipulating mass-produced, slip-cast, bone-china objects and making expressive, often anthropomorphic constructions. For her conveying the material's own story is a crucial aspect for the potter to create a work that is full of life and spirit.



Ice Age
2014
Bone China

MENGYA ZHANG

Mengya Zhang graduated from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute in 2017 with a Masters degree. She uses the iconic blue-and-white technique from traditional Chinese porcelain painting.

The process of her work is a type of underglaze decoration using ceramic painting and is fired by a 1310 degree oxidation-reduction reaction. The work is inspired by 'live as long as the pine trees and cranes' (松鹤延年), a common auspicious phrase in Chinese. The pine tree is a symbol of longevity in traditional Chinese culture, because it remains green even in the harshest winters, so it stands for resilience, endurance, and strength against adversity.



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Pine Tree and Crane
D30cm
Porcelain

JIAZHENG WANG

Jiazheng Wang founded JIA Ceramic Studio in 2010, after studying ceramic sculpture at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute for four years. He has been creating ceramic art and designing products since then. He launched the JIA showroom at Tao Xi Chuan, Jingdezhen in 2016.

Wang is obsessed with the blue and white pottery from the Yuan (1368–1644) and Ming dynasty (1271–1368), which possess different qualities in the glaze and patterns. The glaze from the Yuan dynasty is rich and thick, which results in a magical shade on the blue and white pottery. The ornament on Wang's ceramic works all comes from his day-to-day paintings. He combines the traditional blue-and-white pottery making with the modern painting of his own paintings to discover more possibilities in ceramic art.



Blue Diamond
H36xD40cm
Ceramic

ZHIWEI XU

A Ceramic graduate from the China Academy of Art, Zhiwei Xu is currently teaching at Longquan Celadon Baojian Technician College. He participates in various domestic exhibitions and has won multiple awards.

This plate-form celadon used an embossed pattern of plaid. It also applied different shades of colours and textures. In the process of making this artwork, Xu consciously used the shapes and lines as an expression, showing his care for nature. The outcome of this refined work invites a natural and fresh meaning to ceramics.



Grid
2017
D41cm H15cm
Celadon



YAN SHEN

Embroidery, as a symbol of Chinese traditional culture, is a delicate handicraft with a colourful natural thread used to create intricate patterns. Yan Shen has been dedicated to designing leather goods for 20 years. She is particularly fascinated by the beauty of older embroidered pieces, although they are not as bright as the newer ones, the texture and variation of the appearance across the time, all add to the preciousness of this art.

By embroidering older redesigned pieces onto bags, according to the designer, is an endeavour to inherit this Chinese tradition. The designer tries to give the old embroidery a new meaning and revitalise the classical beauty with a modern twist.



Embroidered Leather Bag
2015
Leather, Silk

YONGPING WU

Yongping Wu graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Currently he is a professor and the head of the Contemporary Glass Art Center within the School of Design at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. He is also a member of China Artists Association and China Sculpture Society.

Yongping Wu fuses various sculpture materials, which include metal, ceramics, plastics and woods. For him the premise of mastering a material is to understand its properties and to find the key traits of this material. Yongping Wu creates fascinating patterns; these are produced by overlapping stacks of forgings, while the delicate and soft lines are created on the steel surface. This work combines the unique copper hand-making method, from Yunnan province, with the elements of modern international design to present the beauty of traditional craftsmanship.



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Mask
2015
33x26x4cm
Copper, wood, lacquer

WEI PAN

Pan Graduated from the department of fine arts in Shanghai Donghua University. Wei Pan excels at using ancient Chinese characters and artistic patterns to explore the concept that calligraphy and painting common origins. The pictographic words from ancient books, such as oracle inscriptions and seal characters are his patterned inspirations.

Pan transforms calligraphy and Chinese characters into visual aesthetics with stipples and lines. His masterpiece "Characters" is made of a wooden body, covered with his abstract calligraphy and finished with lacquer. The artwork is meant to blur the boundary between pictures and text, surpassing the original meaning and becoming symbols which are more closely related to the visual language of abstract paintings.



Characters
2012
15x6.5cm
Lacquer, Wooden Body

CHUNMING PAN

Chunming Pan is a craftsman specialising in wood and the furniture designer at Tea Space. He has designed various collections of furniture, tea sets, incense burners, as well as collectables based on the concept of exquisiteness, elegance, simplicity and durability.

This series is inspired by the window grille in traditional Chinese gardens. When the sun shines through the window a beautiful shadow will fall on the ground, leading them on a journey exploring time. The style of Pan's woodworks is simple and sleek so that the viewer can feel the original charm of the wood itself. He carefully adapted the fine solid wood, which must be excavated as a whole and hand-polished with exquisite craftsmanship. Walnut oil is applied to the surface in order to make the these designs last for a long time.



Window Grille Incense Box
10x10x2.8cm
Sandalwood



JIANBING CHEN SHUYI QI

Jianbing Chen graduated from Fuzhou Arts and Crafts School and Shuyi Qi is currently studying an MA in product design at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Both artists specialise in handcrafted lacquerware.

The tea tray adopts a perfectly round shape, which represents family unity and completeness. It is a minimalist symbol used within Chinese aesthetics. The large black and polished gold area; on the tea tray paint panel, shows the artistic conception of the Chinese traditional landscape aesthetics. This is to remind people of nature in their modern dwellings. This lacquer design exquisitely uses the raw lacquer materials and the traditional enamelling techniques.



Lacquer Round Tea Tray
2015
26x5.5cm
Lacquer and Ceramic

HAO XU

Born in Changan, Xu is vice president of the Sichuan Society for the Study of Life Aesthetics, the founder of TAIE Culture and TAIE Design which showcases the unique charm from the East.

The designer is fascinated by the ancient culture emanating from the Sichuan province, especially Chengdu, as it is a special city in relation to multiculturalism. Experiencing the cultural connotations of different cities and using the objects to express this the designer sought to represent the unique image of Chengdu. It took more than three years to create the unique texture of TAIE Shang Xiang's stoneware and the dark steel-like stone surface.



Bridge
2017
68×40cm
Xuan Qing stone



MINGJIAN CAO

Cao Graduated from the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts. He worked on the R&D and was a designer for the painted interior of FAW Hongqi Car. He has also established the Mudu Studio.

Rhino skin paint is one of the traditional techniques of lacquerware. The texture seems very simple, but it has more than forty layers of lacquer. The thickness of the lacquer is less than 1 mm. The combination of traditional lacquer techniques and ceramics make his lacquerware remind us of our history.

Lacquer Vase
2016
Large H25.5cm
Small H15.5cm
Lacquer



HONGGUANG CAI

Hongguang Cai has been working on bamboo craft since she was 16. Now she has a studio in Dongyang, Zhejiang, where she weaves all kinds of bamboo products for over 10 hours every day. She has particular interests in creating everyday objects inspired by the traditional lifestyle.

Cai remembers seeing everyone using bamboo products at home when she was younger, but this has now been replaced with plastic. She thinks bamboo baskets are much better than plastic bags. The baskets are made from raw bamboo with minimal industrial process and are safe to be in contact with food. One can be used for a lifetime and Cai hopes that people will become more aware of environmental issues and change their lifestyle accordingly.

The "Red Food Basket" is inspired by a traditional item that is part of a dowry in Dongyang's local culture. It is used to contain food and snacks that younger people made as a present to bring to their elder family.



Red Basket
28*28*30cm
Bamboo



JUNJIE ZHANG

SOZEN was founded in 2012 by Junjie Zhang and includes design services, brand planning and self-operated product brands. The designers of Sozen's team are from the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts, Milan Polytechnic University and other international institutions. Sozen focuses on the innovative dynamic and emotional value of design.

In this piece, Zhang used the natural elasticity of bamboo as the main material of the lampshade and brought the smooth lines of bamboo to their extreme. At the beginning of the design process Zhang used the computer to simulate the shape of the bamboo and in the final production the thin bamboo strips were matched with the latitude and longitude lines of the digital model. It shows the unique beauty and softness of bamboo.



Bamboo Soft Lamp
60cmx60cmx38cm
Bamboo

Nature Bamboo

Xuejiao Tan graduated from the Department of Decorative Design of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, and Chunyou Yi has been engaged in interior and architectural design since 1999. In 2006, they founded Nature Bamboo. By fusing the natural and environmentally friendly material; bamboo, with traditional handicrafts to create a series of products, including lamps, furniture, porcelain, textiles and other home accessories.

The appearance of the "Apple Floor Lamp" is derived from the shape of an apple; sleek and elegant. The design of the "Apple Floor Lamp" has been modified and improved, not only challenging the limitations of this craft, but also making compromises according to the characteristics of bamboo. It reaches a balance between aesthetics, restrictions of material and craft so that the rounded shape of the lamp is full of visual tension.



Xuejiao Tan ,Chunyou Yi

Apple floor lamp, 2015
37x37x55cm
Bamboo



**For any enquiries,
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China Design Centre

中国设计中心

The place to experience and collaborate with Chinese design and innovation.

Founded in 2013 by a team of architects and designers with a professional and creative network across China, China Design Centre promotes the understanding of China's rapidly evolving design culture. CDC has over 5 years of experience in planning, organising and curating diverse cultural events and design exhibitions in the UK, China and Europe, showing at important fairs including Maison & Objet, London Design Festival, London Craft Week and Lucca Biennale. It is the cultural bridge between the East and West.

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