



Photo: Ruy Teixeira

You might not know it, but anyone who regularly reads the design press will certainly be well aware of the work (if not the names) of the graduates of the Design Academy Eindhoven. Its roll call of alumni and teaching staff reads like the *Who's Who* of the international design scene.

The New York Times recently placed the Academy at the top of design education worldwide, while the professional design and architectural mag *Icon* placed it as the only educational institute in its recent Top 10 of 'Who and what matters in design worldwide today'. If anything else, over the last ten years it has become responsible for, and synonymous with, consumers re-engaging with the decorative arts – something that brands and services in this sector should be thankful for.

As Emily Campbell, head of design and architecture at the British Council (which has worked with Eindhoven graduates such as Tord Boontje) points out: "Decorative is the important word. Their sensibilities heralded a sort of rapprochement with decoration and reference that Modernist design had spurned. Decoration has a very natural allure; it has a comforting referentiality and sensual loveliness that a matt black box can't claim. Of course consumers like that kind of thing."

Specifically, says Campbell "Eindhoven's 'Man and Humanity' programme was a coherent, vigorous and well-communicated initiative at a time when the need for design in the developing world was acutely felt. At the same time Eindhoven seemed to nurture designers with the exquisite

ability to integrate the archetypal, decorative or patina'd with the modern. Bey and Boontje are good examples."

Who can forget the fine cupboards, tables and chairs Piet Hein Eek fashioned from 'waste' timber? Or the tree-trunk to which Jurgen Bey affixed antique chair backs to form an unusual contemporary bench? Or his 'Cocoon' series, in which old furniture was given new life with a second skin of modern synthetic materials. Bey's conceptual products now feature in museums worldwide including New York's MOMA.

Meanwhile, practically every international magazine covering the field has featured Hella Jongerius' striking vases with their elegant tracery, bottles of glass, ceramics and tape and her porcelain tableware featuring traditional and modern patterns. Hella began producing these articles a decade ago, and has since inspired countless young designers to combine traditional crafts with hi-tech production methods.

Tord Boontje, a Design Academy Eindhoven student during the 1990s who now lectures at London's Royal College of Art, reached an international audience with his decorative lamps with floral swags. According to the recent British Council exhibition 'Import Export': "His luxurious, glittering *Blossum* chandeliers for Swarovski and his festooned, photo-etched metal Garland lights for Habitat have spearheaded a new wave of interest in decorative design. Boontje's Wednesday Collection, exploring fairytale images of flowers, leaves, birds and animals, encompasses everything from furniture, lighting and glassware to wall coverings, laser-cut

Facing page:

Above: Urn vase, Hella Jongerius, for Droog, 1993.
Soft polyurethane, 21 x 23cm.
Image concept: Marjo Kranenburg

Below left:

Cappellini Crochet Chair, Marcel Wanders for Droog, 1996

Below right:

Crochet Chair, Marcel Wanders, 2006

This page:

Above left: *Little Flowers*

Falling, curtain/screen, Tord

Boontje for Moroso, 2005.

Laser-cut microfibre

Above right:

The Beauty of the Insignificant, Anne-Marie Piscaer, student of the Design Academy Eindhoven