

Bonjour Singapore!

FARM joins the Singapore Pavilion in *Maison&Objet* this year as it continues to champion local design.

Text by Rachel Lee-Leong. Images courtesy of FARM.



AS THIS ARTICLE IS BEING WRITTEN, FARM IS SHOWING its wares at *Maison&Objet* in Paris from 9 to 13 September 2011. In an email to us during the fair, *Selwyn Low*, one of four directors at FARM, says that they have been “super busy”. It’s a good sign. Especially so for the multi-disciplinary studio given that it has long been a champion of local design and wants to export it to an international market.

Together with a few other products from its existing range of items by local creatives, FARM is exhibiting three new products developed in collaboration with fashion designer *Grace Tan* of *Kwodrent* and product designer *Hans Tan*.

Grace presents two series of laser-cut stainless steel metal – *Meander* and *Poppy*. Both start off as flat sheets of steel that the user can mould into shape. *Meander* is extruded to form a vessel of spiraling steel strips while *Poppy* is extruded into a bowl of tessellated facets. “We were very drawn to Grace’s tactile sensibility and mathematical approach, as seen in her fabric structures, and wanted to bring that to a different material,” says Low.

“Hans is an amazing design thinker who creates objects that often straddle the realms of art and design. So we thought it would be interesting to produce an affordable range of products by him,” Low says of FARM’s collaboration with Hans.

At the fair, Hans presents two series of products: *Petrified Victorian* and *Spotted Nonya*. The former is a range of silverware seemingly cast in solid surface. Preserved almost like fossils, they reflect the latent capacity of archetypal forms in leaving permanent impressions in our mind. Created using CNC machining, these

↑ SPOT ON:
Hans Tan’s
reinterpretation of
Peranakan porcelain

↓ POP UP:
Poppy is a tessellated
vessel that is moulded
from a flat steel sheet

“fossils” are a result of numerous tests and adjustments to perfect the pattern and detailing of silverware on solid surface material.

Spotted Nonya is a fresh interpretation of Peranakan porcelain. Taking traditional domestic wares native to Chinese Peranakans in Southeast Asia, Hans sandblasted the vessels, which have first been overlaid with a spotted pattern mask. The areas that are protected by the mask are preserved while the unprotected areas are sanded down to reveal raw white porcelain. “The technique is an industrial reinterpretation of the traditional resist dyeing technique used to dye fabric patterns,” Low reveals. Already, *Spotted Nonya* has won the Most Inventive Award at *Maison&Objet*.

Still, it’s not all about creativity and winning awards for FARM. “We wanted to make objects that are relevant to each designer’s body of works, yet suitable to be sold through a very challenging retail system,” Low says candidly, adding that finding the right price point is yet another big issue when it comes to ensuring the success of a product.

Judging from the response that they have been getting at the fair, it is clear that they have gotten the formula right this time. “It seems likely that we will be enlarging and expanding the possibilities of the product range,” Low adds. This, even before the fair has ended. ♦ farm.sg

