

## ASSOCIATE, DISSOCIATE, SOCIO-CREATE

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Is it Fall that makes me to want to surround myself with warmth, comfort and poetry? Like a friend who awakens in you the need for non-serious objects, Design Boom presents a Web Site that delights the senses ([www.designboom.com](http://www.designboom.com)). It holds up information that makes you reminisce, information that transforms memories and awakens your creativity.

You will find comfort and stimulation in the entertainment section of the Web Site, where you can play, study, shop, read, and look in the past/future. A card game invites you to study design by matching examples of fonts, buildings, chairs, and monsters that belong to the same historical period. It's a bit like fridge poetry, but instead of sticking phrases together you get to match design styles (see figure 1a, b, c & d). Though there is a correct answer, you are free to ignore it. You can choose to create incorrect combinations and embrace designs that are joyfully imperfect.

To look in the future and to please your mind and eyes, you can dissect the "trendguide." You will see fulfilling design objects, appetizing colors, wild and woolly textures and fresh and honest shapes, while studying forecasts on future design trends. Looking through these wonders tickles me to death. In the shopping area, you can further explore new products and tendencies, with bold wonders, crisp and edgy products, and luxurious ideas (figure 2). Or you can choose the comfort of the past by reading about nomadic art's philosophy and relish in its ancient, charmed traditions.

You may get caught reading about Aldo Rossi, Zaha Hadid, Philip Starck or other famous architects. An interview with Zaha Hadid shows her as ever, unafraid to follow her heart. Her furniture collection looks inspired from powerful geographical formations such as glaciers and cliffs. The pieces are molded by typological data, ergonomic needs, and functional requirements. But they remain precariously far from predetermined patterns of use and focus instead on abstraction and metaphor (figure 3).

Somewhere else you get lost reading about Aldo Rossi's work and admiring how he creates thought provoking urban still life by choosing materials, colors, objects and textures to render his work. It speaks of sensuality through a choice of matter and original contours (see figure 4). With a more techno edge, Philippe Starck and Alain Mikli present an indestructible pair of glasses with a ball-and-socket joint anchoring the frame to the sides of the frames via a sprung cord. Through sketches illustrating the design process (figure 5), you get to see that the invention was inspired by the study of the collarbone, thereby giving it its trade-name: The biolink.

If some parts of the site are more commercial, other parts are more socio-political in content (not that these need be separate issues). In a review of the Biennale of Architecture (Venice, Italy), the Web Site introduces projects that walk a fine line between design and social consciousness. One of the project (by Shigeru Ban) introduces paper log houses to address the needs of people in disaster areas (such as in the

1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan). The solution is cheap, recyclable, and simple to build with a foundation made of beer cases filled with sand, walls made of paper tubes and roof made of tent material. The paper tubes can be made on site and the structure has an appearance 'acceptable' to people (figure 6). Another proposal (by Yung Ho Chang) focuses on repairing damaged ecology and creating a symbiosis between ecosystem and urban life in China by incorporating bamboo to the city's infrastructure. With a nutrition fluid inside, the bamboo line reach every building and providing an entire city with a network of the plant (see figure 7). These plants repay city dwellers by acting as sun-shade, air purifier and humidifier.

Closer to home, a homeless vehicle design is proposed as a reaction to New York's resistance to homelessness (figure 8). The vehicle is not intended to provide a solution to the housing problem. Rather, it draws attention to the fact that people have no choice but to live on the street. A previous iteration of this vehicle was shown to potential users and was adapted based on their feedback. As it stands, the vehicle tries to camouflage itself as an everyday object by reminding us for example, of a food vendor carts. At the end, you don't need to think about anything spiritual or practical when you see this cart. It can stand alone as a symbolic statement. The movement of carts through the city would seem like an act of resistance.

Whether you want to read about coffee makers, a guide to Stockholm, Ettore Sottsass, or the history of the folding chair, this Web Site can help you dissociate from society and get lost in dreams. It left me with memories of lines and planes, forms and shapes, ...like visual poetry: A feast for the eyes. This Web Site isn't good, it's excellent. And such excellence makes me happy to be alive.

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Figure 1b: *Guggenheim Museum*, 1959, by F. L. Wright

Figure 1c: *Tulip Chair*, 1956, by Eero Saarinen

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Figure 2: *Kobe bed* by Vico Magistretti

Figure 3: *Stalactite and stalagmite (tables)* by Zaha Hadid

Figure 4: *Main building with basilica*, original sketches by Aldo Rossi, 1996

Figure 5: *From the human collarbone to the biolink-joint*, by Starck and Mikli.

Figure 6: *Church made of paper log and beer cases, Kobe 1995*, by Shigeru Ban

Figure 7: *Urbanizing bamboo*, by Yung Ho Chang

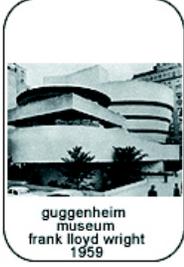
Figure 8: *Homeless vehicle*, by Krzysztof Wodiczko

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1a



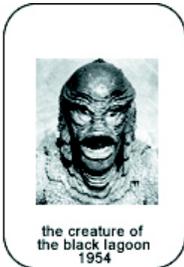
1b

guggenheim museum  
frank lloyd wright  
1959



1c

nr. 151 (tulip)  
eero saarinen  
1956



1d

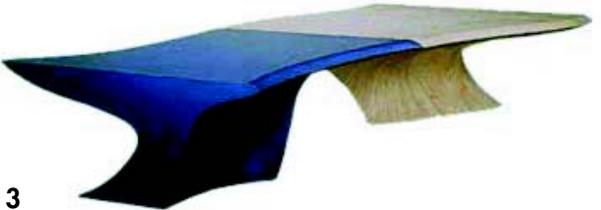
the creature of the black lagoon  
1954



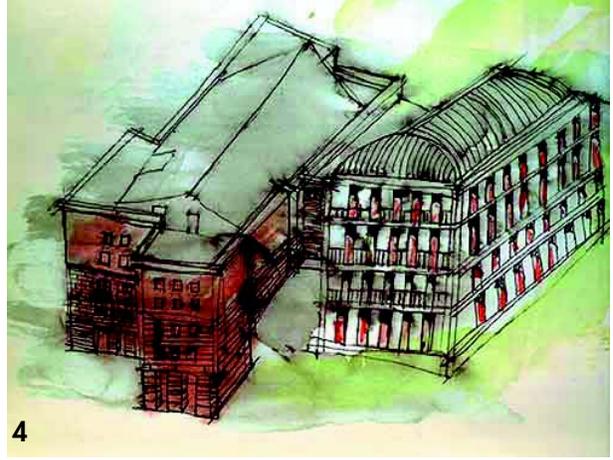
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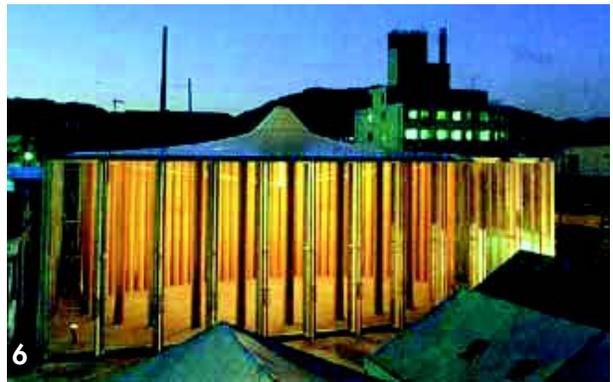
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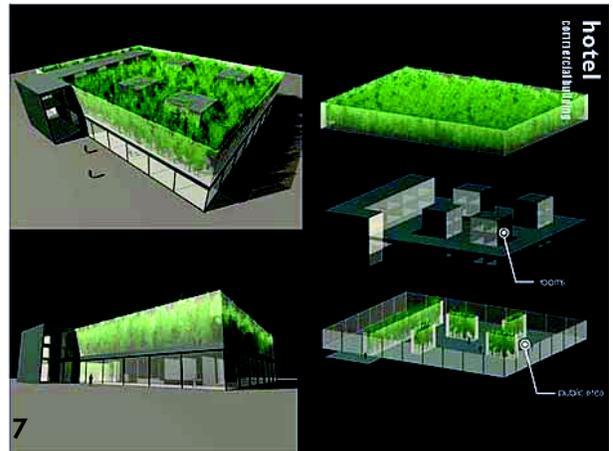
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7



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