

It is a curious moment when one discovers two contemporary designers producing superficially similar work. Immediately comparisons are made on shape, material, scale, colour, texture... Intrigue is perhaps further piqued when we discover that the products were made by two independently working designers, continents apart.

In GEENEN + HOON The Aram Gallery delves into one such remarkable episode, and exemplifies it with the work of Bram Geenen and Il Hoon Roh. Both designers work experimentally in their distinctive material choice and, its application. However the similarities in their aesthetics are uncanny.

Looking to the architecture of Antonio Gaudi and Frei Otto, both Geenen + Hoon developed unique methods to form perfect arches for their furnitures' legs. Geenen analyses chains hung from above at three fixed points of a triangle - the resulting arch is defined by gravity. Hoon however works cautiously with a sheet of fabric stretched atop a table frame tightening and stitching the draped fabric until perfect arches emerge between each leg, defined by the capabilities of the material. At this perfectly balanced stage Hoon laminates the fabric in GRP (Glass Fibre Reinforced Plastic) whilst Geenen uses his arches as the basis for sketches and cardboard prototypes, resulting in a 3D printed stool. This example is just one of many which typifies how Geenen + Hoon's practices overlap.

Interested in how designers think and work, The Aram Gallery is eager to investigate the steps which have led these two to arrive a similar visual conclusions. The exhibition presents their initial sketches, scale prototypes, full size prototypes and finished pieces so that aesthetic similarities and practical differences, where they exist, are easily identifiable.

In statements written by Geenen + Hoon we learn of the underlying problems they are trying to wrestle with, and are free to make our own judgments on the conclusions they have arrived at thus far. We are fascinated by how interestingly their paths have intersected, and of course we are equally excited to see where they go next.

Director Zeev Aram

Acting Curator Héloïse Parke

GEENEN + HOON

17th September - 5th November 2011



The Aram Gallery
110 Drury Lane
Covent Garden
WC2B 5SG

+44 (0)207 557 7526

Mon - Fri 10 - 6 (Thurs 7)

www.thearamgallery.org

GEENEN



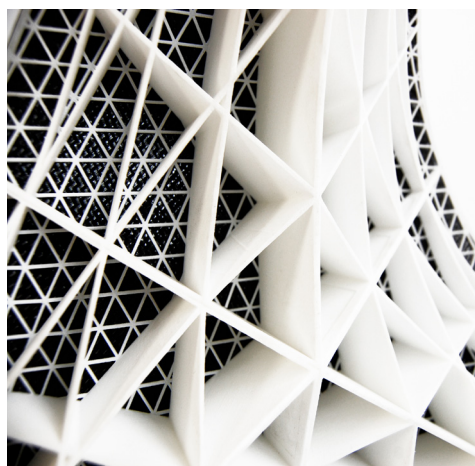
BRAM GEENEN (NL)

Studio Geenen proposes design solutions for current issues, based on our research of developments in technology and science and their effects on society. In 2009 I designed the Gaudi Stool as a graduation project. An extremely lightweight piece of furniture it was designed using the same methods as were developed by Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi to engineer the strongest shape for his churches. The Gaudi Stool gained international recognition for being an uncompromising and technologically advanced piece of furniture, and was exhibited in many places including Cologne, New York, Prague and Milan, and published internationally. The stool is also included in the permanent collection of the DHUB Design Museum Barcelona.

The following year I developed the Gaudi Chair, cooperating with the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research and companies specializing in composites and 3D printing. The studio also started working on an online design collaboration platform, to be released in December 2011. We also continue to work on furniture in which high-end techniques and innovative materials are applied.

Projects start off with research into global developments, narrowing down towards investigating more specific technologies and materials, at which stage manufacturers get involved. In drawing knowledge from these specialized companies, each project tries to feedback unconventional solutions to the client. The shapes of our products are mostly defined by physics and material characteristics – used to create logical, natural forms. The final products are progressive yet timeless, inspirational displays of solutions towards better products.

studiogeenen.com





HOON

IL HOON ROH (GB)

Structures and forms found in nature, such as beehives and human cells, are models of efficiency and elegance. They have been fashioned over time through the evolutionary process to best serve their purpose. This observation is supported by a significant amount of research by biologists, mathematicians, engineers, architects and designers.

Based on this idea, my primary focus is the Self Form Finding Technique, which is a design method that mimics building methods already found in nature. Antonio Gaudí, Buckminster Fuller and Frei Otto are among the masters who honed this technique. Their idea was to allow a material to take its final form on its own rather than forcing it to go against its natural inclination.

As an architect, I have developed and carried out experiments following this technique as architectural investigations. The resulting structures and forms are not mere copies resembling those found in nature, instead my process replicates nature's methods. The resulting structures are lightweight, structurally optimized and extremely efficient. To make these organic forms I developed a fabric stretching technique, a single piece of fabric is stretched into a three-dimensional form. The resulting shapes are not pre-set but allowed to develop into the final shapes.

I hope to develop enlarged versions of this type of lightweight structure as a building one day. Table legs would become columns, and the surface of the table, a roof structure with glass membranes or ETFEs for pleasant natural lighting and ventilation. The design even has natural curvatures for potentially easy drainage.

ilhoon.com

