

Kindred spirits

This month, the New Folk collective, designer-makers of objects for the home, shows their craft at the International Furniture Fair Singapore. Here's a preview.



Clockwise from left: Stanley Ruiz, Tisha de Borja, Schema CEO Jerry Jiao, Lilianna Manahan, Wataru Sakuma, Triboa Bay Living's Randy Viray, and Gabby Lichauro

After having been invited to its showcase of up-and-coming Asian designers last year, industrial designer Gabby Lichauro returns to the International Furniture Fair Singapore (IFFS) this year, this time with New Folk, a collective comprised of himself and seven Filipino designers and manufacturers whose work he has long admired. "They are all looking to push the boundaries in terms of manufacturing and Philippine design," he says. Gabby, along with some members of New Folk, speaks with *ELLE Decoration* about craft and collaboration.

Why "New Folk"?

Gabby Lichauro: It can mean a lot of things—new generation, handmade, folk craft. I came up with the words, and Rita Nazareno [who is part of New Folk, but was absent for the photo above] pointed out the multiple meanings. It just sounded right. I collaborated heavily with Rita on this show, and she was a big support in helping me put everything together.

What are the challenges in mounting a group exhibition like this?

GL: IFFS gave me a huge space to fill, 50 square meters. Last year, my participation was subsidized, but this year, I had to come up with most of the funds. So budget was the big challenge. The space also led me to the idea of a group show. I thought, why not showcase a diverse collection of different objects and highlight smaller home accessories. Some pieces are newly developed, some we are showing again because we feel it is the right context for them to be better appreciated.

Tell us a little bit about the thinking behind your creations.

Tisha de Borja: I conceptualized a set of cleaning tools with my sister-in-law, artist Patricia Perez Eustaquio. We chose solid bamboo because it is so sculptural. We were trying to come up with a line of home accessories that are scaled down for apartment living. You could hang these on your door.

Wataru Sakuma: I was inspired by crystal patterns and Japanese flower-shaped pressed sugar. To make it, I played with the flat shape and folded the paper to come out this shape. It's an origami technique.

Stanley Ruiz: These speakers are the

production version of a one-off art piece that I exhibited in New York. Originally, I carved a wood log and turned it into a speaker. I later had the idea of doing it in paper.

What would you say is the group's shared goal?

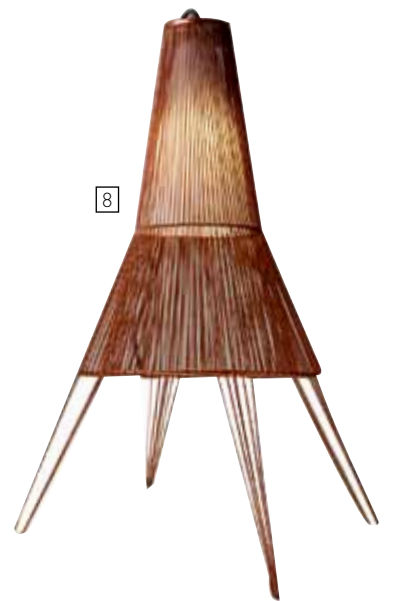
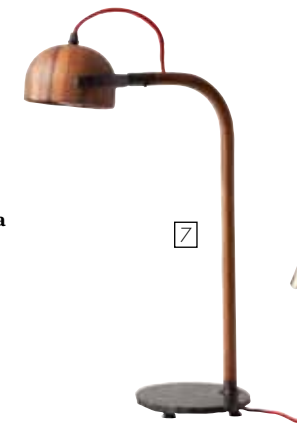
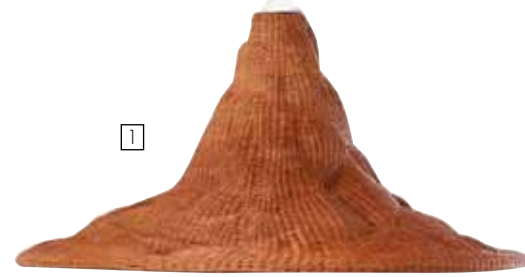
GL: Our common goal is to make our products unique by challenging the manufacturing process. For me, it is about innovation, about challenging the normal way of production. There is a focus on manufacturing things. That is why I invited both designers, like Stanley Ruiz and Lilianna Manahan, and manufacturers, like S.C. Vizcarra and Triboa Bay Living.

And the strength of the collective?

GL: Craft is our strength, especially when compared to other countries. We are surrounded by interesting materials [in the Philippines]. But it is not just about handcraft. It is about designers and artisans working together to bring craft to another level.

IFFS runs from March 13 to 16, 2015, at the Singapore Expo. (iffs.com.sg)

PHOTOGRAPHY: MIGUEL MACIARANCO; PRODUCTION: LEAH NEMILSAN JOSE; TEXT AND INTERVIEWS: JENNIFER BAUM-LAGDAMEO; HAIR: AMARKEUP; VIDANONJUAN (TISHA DE BORJA) AND ELAINE GANUELAS (LILIANNA MANAHAN).



WIT AND WONDER

From lamps that take inspiration from nature to a line of hand-woven bags evoking the cinematic force that is *Star Wars* to astute updates of everyday household objects, the creations of the New Folk collective offer delight along with design.

- 1 "Monolith" lamp in wicker by Gabby Lichauro and Rita Nazareno
- 2 "Cleaning Implements" set in rattan and skeletal bamboo by Tisha de Borja
- 3 "Creatures" in resin and cast brass by Lilianna Manahan
- 4 "Crystal Clock" in abaca paper by Wataru Sakuma
- 5 "Hunter Bag" by Rita Nazareno for S.C. Vizcarra's "Zacarias" collection
- 6 "Symbiosis Speaker" in abaca paper by Stanley Ruiz, in collaboration with Masaeco
- 7 Table lamp in metal and wood by Randy Viray for Triboa Bay Living
- 8 "À Côté" floor lamp in metal wire with powder finish by Segolene Aebi for Schema