



Hong Kong City of Design

Evolution of design since the Handover
 Counting the aesthetic value of architecture
 Spreading the word on French Design



François Champsaur

French designer François Champsaur is the creative force behind furniture brand HC28 which combines modern design with traditional Chinese elements, feeding a growing demand for contemporary furniture in China. HC28 is in the process of becoming a global success with a total of 12 stores not only in Greater China but also in Paris and London.

Christophe Rebour is Founder and President of In Process, a French design firm structured around observation and creation. The company gained prominence with the creation of the Nabaztag rabbit which connects to the Web via Wi-Fi.



Christophe Rebour

Why has the Nabaztag rabbit achieved such success?

Nabaztag can be described as the first emotional messenger. Connected to a Wi-Fi network, it can transmit messages and a variety of information through simple ear movements, different colours that appear on its belly or various sounds. With the creation of the Nabaztag, I believe we solved a latent need for an object that generates, facilitates and stimulates communication between people by adding a playfulness to it and by demystifying technology.

Tell us about the HC28 furniture collection you recently created.

Three years ago, I was asked to develop a furniture collection to be distributed in China and Taiwan. I did some research for this project and was most impressed with Chinese furniture design and its ability to blend artistic form with practical functionality. For me, traditional Chinese furniture's timeless simplicity, its deep-rooted modernity and magnificent proportions make it one of the most beautiful in the world.

I realized, however, that there was a demand in China for something different and that I could create a collection that combines Chinese art de vivre with contemporary design, with a French twist. To this end, I worked with highly-skilled Chinese artisans who specialize in traditional lacquer techniques and suggested new colours, different shapes and unconventional proportions. I was a bit wary of their reactions, but our partnership ended up being a joyful collaboration.



Are any of your creations distributed in Asia?

One of our major products is Laneige-High Perm Curling Mascara, which was created for the Amore Pacific Group. To develop this cosmetic, we took into consideration the fact that Asian women's eyes had specific characteristics and we adapted it to their particular requirements. Because of this mascara, the Group became market leader in this category in both China and South Korea.

There are opportunities in Asia for foreign design companies like In-Process. Designers can either work for established Asian brands, like we are doing for Amore Pacific, or for Western companies that need to innovate to efficiently position themselves in Asia.

What are your thoughts on design in China?

There is currently an emergence of Chinese designers and I believe that they will be significant contributors to the evolution of contemporary design. French painters helped define contemporary art in the 1920s and 1930s and Americans were key to its development in the 1960s, but I think that it will be China's turn in the years to come. There is such an ebullient energy in China, a confidence in the future and a willingness to move forward that you feel like anything is possible.