



PAM GONZALES LOPEZ
Changing Chapters

Editor's Letter

HEARTBEAT

I'VE REALIZED MAJORITY OF DECISIONS are made because the heart just wants them—even with something as minor as selecting a music album to play in the background to certainly life-changing ones that lead to transitions.

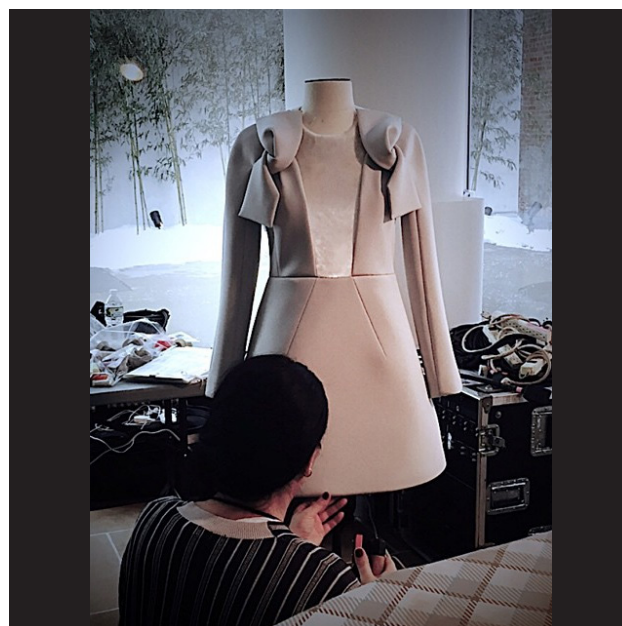
Take Steven Tan: with the same ambition and drive he used to attain his position as the Senior Vice-President of SM Supermalls, he takes charge of the design in his minimalist home. From the designer pieces that serve as the centerpieces of each room to the hand-painting job needed to transform found furniture into conversation-starting items, he lets his taste guide him, deciding by feel what would be best with no rush to reach the end result. As it is, his house is already a marvel—and he's not yet even done with it.

Listening to your gut feel is different from simply wanting things to go your own way. It takes self-awareness to know what you truly feel inside, and plenty of skill and creativity to follow through. Our cover girl Pam Gonzales Lopez understands this. Despite the lack of encouragement she got to pursue her artistic inclination as a child, she didn't deny her creativity for long. It was fashion or bust, and so right after high school graduation, she left for Manila armed with her dreams and became a respected name in the fashion industry and a source of knowledge in all its aspects. Now, she's trying her hand out in home furniture and interior design, a new project that also speaks of her creative spirit. "It's in my DNA to create and discover things," she tells us, and we believe her.

With this issue, I'd like to encourage you to do more listening to your heart, to pay more attention to what moves your spirit. Whether it's finding the best supplement to help keep your skin in good form, adding something new and exciting to your home to make it more enjoyable and livable, or even booking a ticket to somewhere you've never been—try Bolivia, as seen in our exploRED story on page 26, it looks fantastic—I say, go for it.

People say that the heart wants what it wants. They also say, follow your heart. I hope you do too, with the right intentions.

Ria Prieto
Ria Prieto



@riaprieto:
Work and love. @officialdelpozo #NYFW2015

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Gigi Gaerlan's trademark Custaroons will hit the spot—and leave you craving more.

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Pam Gonzales Lopez

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Creative direction **Niña Muallam**

Styling **MJ Benitez**

Makeup **Ria Aquino** of **MAC Cosmetics**

Hair **Cats Del Rosario**

On the cover: Top, **Givenchy**, Adora, Greenbelt 5

This page: Top and skirt, **Givenchy**, Adora, Greenbelt 5;
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Editor in Chief Ria Prieto

Art Director Niña Muallam

Associate Editor Meg Manzano

Copy Editor September Grace Mahino

External Relations Officer Sophie Villanueva

Social Media Assistant Angela Manuel Go

Contributing Writers

Jay Amante, Ria Casco, Pam Cortez, Mara Santillan Miano,
Bea Osmeña, Trina Razon, Cai Subijano

Contributing Photographers

Sara Black, Johann Bona, Jar Concengco, Sam Lim, Artu
Nepomuceno, Takeshi Shinohara

Interns

Jem Mirador, Loren Señeres, Terese Melissa Yap



Board Chairperson Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez

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art

FAIR GAME

Art Stage Singapore director Lorenzo Rudolf dispels a myth or two

WORDS MEG MANZANO PHOTOGRAPHY TAKESHI SHINOHARA

“NOBODY IN THEIR RIGHT MIND will ask me what Swiss art is,” declared Lorenzo Rudolf as he politely swirled his cup of coffee. In the middle of his narration about the industry, Rudolf comments on the beauty of art in a globalized setting: “You have a collector from the Mongolian Republic now instead of perhaps a well-educated professor from Brooklyn.” Further proof to his seeming argument for globalization, Rudolf cites the local landscape as an example: compared to artists having to fly to New York or London to pursue a career in the arts, nowadays, these folks stay and enjoy the avenue that is the Internet.

“I would do installations, acrylic on canvas, even oil, but I just admitted to myself that there are just more, better artists than me.”

A known curator, art fair organizer, and founder of Art Stage Singapore, Rudolf’s popularity may very well be credited to his previous post as one of the main men at Art Basel for a decade. “My luck was,” reveals the art architect in a hushed manner, “I was the first one in this art world that came from a totally different background. I had all the crazy ideas because I had never done any of this before.” Citing his distance from the industry he now finds himself in, Rudolf intimates his current balance—a combination of his education and his passion.

With a lineage of lawyers, Rudolf initially agreed to the rehearsal of law until he unearthed his early affinity for art, having been a painter growing up. “I would do installations, acrylic on canvas, even oil, but I just admitted to myself that there are just more, better artists than me.”

Of course, a more obvious remnant of his painting career was his decision to take the helm at Art Basel in 1991. For years, the former artist and

current art curator was tasked with orchestrating a fair that would later on prove itself iconic in the art scene. “It came to the point where people would ask other artists why they weren’t at Basel,” reveals Rudolf, testament to the fair’s popularity. As attendance grew in numbers and even became imperative, the curator spurred a sudden resonance with the publishing industry when he accepted an offer to cradle the Frankfurt Book Fair. In 2010, Rudolf decided to venture into the art terrain in Singapore and founded Art Stage.

“An art fair isn’t like any trade show,” explains Rudolf. Promptly dispelling the myth of the starving artist, the art organizer narrates the art fair’s need to strike a relationship with similar industries for profit. There is the luxury industry, there is the banking industry, says the curator. Another myth easily shattered? An art fair as a market place. “While it is an agora, an art fair is still responsible for more than buying and selling,” explains Rudolf. Curators and organizers are tasked with building the market for the art that they are selling at art fairs. “It’s a beautiful thing,” admits the director of being part of a movement that helped realize the potential of the Asian market.

“Sure, it’s much less developed and way more chaotic,” says Rudolf, “but you’re growing something—you’re doing something in Singapore, which is fast becoming a hub of a region.”

Asked what he thought of the looming demise of the print industry, Rudolf smirks and raises his chin slightly. “Why are you asking that?” Two seconds of silence into what probably should have been an avenue to justify the query, he laughs and allows his earlier ideas to resurface. “The beauty with art is that it’s personal; it’s not just Asian art or European or Western art. No one calls art from Switzerland, Swiss art. It is, at the core of it, art. There’s a need to overcome these nationalisms.” And perhaps that’s the very thing that populates the print and publishing industry: the language relies heavily on its geographical locations, while art, well, Rudolf’s idealized art remains appreciated, free from any language barrier. •



ART BY NUMBERS

51,000

Estimated number of visitors at Art Stage Singapore’s 2015 edition

75

Percentage of the exhibitors based in Asia Pacific

197

Galleries that participated in the yearly fair

29

Number of countries that participated in the event

\$1.6M

Price of an artwork by Damien Hirst that was sold to a regional collector

desiRED

OFF THE RECORD

Jay Amante's vinyl picks for the uninitiated

1

Toad
the Wet
Sprocket
–
Dulcinea,
1994|Columbia
Records|Netherlands



2

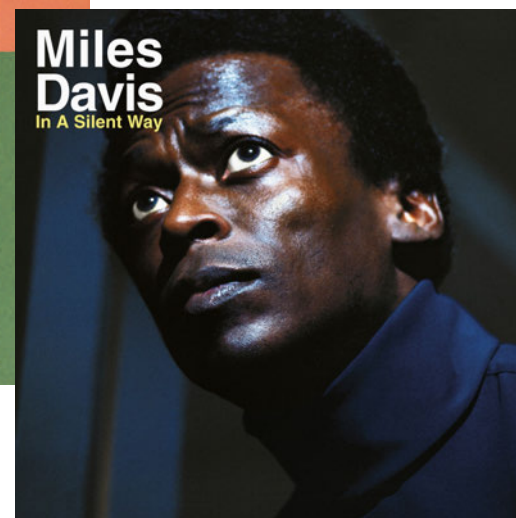


3



5

TIGERLILY
NATALIE MERCHANT



4

It's very important for me to start off with Dulcinea. This record has been playing in my head on repeat for the past two decades and is very close to my heart. The four-piece band had everything in sync with this one, lyrically powerful and melodically majestic. It is a masterpiece of an album from start to finish. All the tracks, when listened to with gentle care, gives an inexplicable, life-changing sense of contentment. **2 Beck – *Sea Change*, 2009|Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab|US** When *Sea Change* first came out, it transformed our perception of Beck Hansen as a musician. The album was nothing like his previous records; it was slow, sparse, and deeply autobiographical. The transparency of his words was contagious, and somehow, we were made aware of what he was going through and we genuinely empathized with him. More importantly, and the magical thing about *Sea Change*, is that somehow the songs are not just his, but ours as well. **3 *Almost Famous* soundtrack, 2000|Dreamworks Records|US** The *Almost Famous* soundtrack is an essential mixtape for music fans. Cameron Crowe has this uncanny ability to select that perfect song for that perfect scene. The songs included in this record are not the obvious choices you would think one would select from big-named musicians like The Beach Boys, The Who, Todd Rundgren, and Elton John. Instead, Crowe put little known gems and made them work. This soundtrack inspires us to listen to more music and pick out that perfect background music for our own perfect scenes. **4 Miles Davis – *In A Silent Way*, 1981|CBS Sony|Japan** *In A Silent Way*'s hypnotic texture never fails to put Davis' audience into a calm, trance-like state. This LP feels like one coherent song. As the cast take turns in sharing snippets of their mind to the their listeners, Davis' trumpet suddenly speaks with perfect timing and control. Davis and his band take their time to tell you their story. They hold your hand as the events unfold, and what a wonderful, glorious tale it is. **5 Natalie Merchant – *Tigerlily*, 2007|Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab|US** *Tigerlily* is one of those special records that bring you back to a certain time when these words and music were appropriately in tune with how you felt. Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs did a great job pressing this one on vinyl. The sound quality is top notch. The fifth cut "Carnival" is a good example of how well the band and the vocalist meshed their ideas perfectly. Merchant's distinct voice and lyrics never fail to soothe her audience. •

BEAUTY BOTTLED

Drugs decoded for beauty that starts within

WORDS CAI SUBIJANO PHOTOGRAPHY ARTU NEPOMUCENO

AN INTERVIEW WITH DERMATOLOGIST Dr. Cecilia Faustino of MD Aesthetique reveals the beauty supplements you should be adding to your shopping cart on your next trip to the pharmacy.

GLUTATHIONE

A famous ingredient in top-selling whitening soaps and supplements, glutathione's beauty benefits extend further than a radiant complexion. "Research concludes that boosting glutathione levels can defend the body against free radical or oxidative stress damage, toxins, poisons, ionizing radiation, microorganisms, emotional stress, physical stress, and premature aging," Dr. Faustino says.

ZINC

Apart from fighting off issues with adult acne, zinc also plays a role in staving off the onset of graying hair. "Very small amounts of zinc are necessary for human health as it is very essential in protein synthesis, regulation of insulin levels, and immune system functions," Dr. Faustino explains. "A daily intake of zinc is required because the body has no specialized zinc storage system. Zinc aids the body in repairing and

growing hair and it keeps the oil glands of the hair working properly. Insufficient zinc levels may result in loss of hair and hair that looks thin and dull, and goes grey early."

BIOTIN

Also known as vitamin B7, this supplement has come into the spotlight for its ability to keep hair lush and shiny, and according to Dr. Faustino, the research holds up: "Biotin plays an important role in keeping the scalp, hair, and skin healthy. Known biotin deficiency symptoms include body hair loss and thinning, dermatitis, dry skin, and brittle fingernails."

COLLAGEN

Already available in ready-to-drink beverages and sachets, supplementing your collagen intake has never been more convenient. Dr. Faustino says that collagen production declines at age 40, and is also affected by factors like sun exposure, smoking, and a diet high in sugar. "As part of the skin's dermis (middle layer of the skin), lack of it can be seen in aging such as in wrinkles, formation of lines, and weakening of cartilage in joints and sagging of the skin," she advises.

CAPSULE COLLECTION



Clé de Peau Beauté
La Crème this high-performance nighttime cream serum brings unparalleled age-defying benefits for flawless, radiant, more youthful skin.



Heaven Bee Venom mask by Deborah Mitchell is a natural alternative to BOTOX and is diluted with shea butter, manuka honey, and lavender oil for a more calming effect.



The **La Prairie** White Caviar Illuminating Système offers the most advanced anti-pigmentation and firming benefits by combining luxury and innovative technology.



art

LIKE MINDED

From canvas creations to the art of accessories

WORDS RIA CASCO PHOTOGRAPHY PATRICK SEGOVIA

ARTIST REGINA DE LEON and jewelry designer Nicole Acuña are very similar women, perhaps more than they'd care to admit. Both educated at the art capital Florence, Italy, art runs in the family, it seems.

Despite an innate knack for art since youth, De Leon's traditional upbringing led her to take up a business management degree in college and a successful career in real estate. For 25 years, she oversaw the construction and administration of her father Manny Acuña's buildings, and hobnobbed with famous architects. After he passed, she relinquished her responsibilities in the family business and decided to pursue her passion in art. "I guess you'll always be restless until you find fulfillment," she says.

Under the tutelage of maestro Alberto Galliani in scenic Florence, De Leon's hands rediscovered what they long knew how to do: paint. Within five years she held her first exhibit, together with her mentor in the Philippines, and from then on, there never was a day she didn't pick up a paintbrush. "In a way, if you notice my paintings, they're kind of obsessive-compulsive because they're very detailed." De Leon attributes her style in painting to being a veteran in the real estate business.

Unlike her mother, Acuña's foray into jewelry was something she did not know she had wanted to do. Coming from a background in publishing, Acuña was constantly exposed to fashion and had developed a particular fascination with accessories. One day, with much prodding from her mother, she attempted making her own jewelry. "What I like about it is that I get to focus, because I'm very [easily] distracted as a person," she claims when asked what she likes about the craft. Realizing that it was something she truly wanted to pursue, she decided to take up a goldsmithing course at a school in Florence called Perseo. "I design basically for myself," she says, laughing, when asked what inspires her aesthetic.

The future is something that the duo has left unplanned still. Acuña is committed to keep making jewelry while always mindful of staying true



to the identity she started with as a designer. "The challenge is to keep my eyes open and be open to new ideas, to not lose the art that's in it," she says. Likewise, De Leon's passion for her craft emanates from within. "I think all of us have gifts; it's just what you choose to develop. You have to have a passion for something. Don't worry about how it will turn out; you just have to enjoy what you are doing." Spoken like true artists. •



Above: Regina sits with her pieces
Left: Nicole's craft rendered in stone and gold



squaRED

WHITE SPACE

Steven Tan discusses the malleability of the color white and beauty in the inchoate

WORDS BEA OSMEÑA PHOTOGRAPHY SAM LIM



As the Senior VP of SM Supermalls, Tan prefers to work in decluttered spaces to allow for creative flow. His work allows him to travel, where he finds most of his inspiration and key pieces that decorate his living and work space.

DRESSED IN A WHITE collared COS shirt and black slacks, Steven Tan warmly welcomes us into his new home of less than a year. Designed by the Calma architectural firm, the house's clean lines, large windows, and geometric patterns in modern style are quintessential Calma, but the interiors are distinct to Tan's personal style.

A BLANK CANVAS

"When I first entered this house, I really fell in love because of the simplicity," Tan emphasizes. "It's white everywhere. It's very clean. It's very streamlined. I think that's why I could really play with it. Even in my own personal style, I love white.

Because then, you can build on it." The interiors, from the tiled floor to the painted ceiling, are white with the occasional burst of color—an aesthetic best reflected in the atrium of his home. The piece that attracts immediate attention is the Marcel Wanders red Tulip Chair, shaped like a pod that stretches upwards and spouts open at the top. The chair sits atop a midnight blue rug speckled with white spots, appropriately named Starry Night by Calligaris. Displayed on a table at the center of the rug is a Tokidoki vinyl sculpture of design legend Karl Lagerfeld.

Turn left and you see the grand dining table of thick mango wood with contoured edges that follow the wood's natural shape. "We found it in

RELAXED AND BARE

This tall living space is transformed in the evening by a Philips Hue bulb that adapts to any color on the spectrum and can be controlled via a downloadable cellphone app.



“It’s white everywhere. It’s very clean. It’s very streamlined. I think that’s why I could really play with it.”



a furniture store in Antipolo and it was originally stained red. We stripped it. We had [the legs replaced], chopped two feet off of the edge.... It was a lot of work. But we got it at a bargain.” This is one of the handful of DIY projects that Tan picked up for the house. Another of these projects are a pair of reupholstered Japan Surplus chairs and an Ikea bedframe that Tan himself spray-painted neon green. “A lot of things I like doing myself, because that makes putting up a house really fun.”

LET THERE BE LIGHT

His cantilevered home office is hugged by a glass wall that overlooks the subdivision’s streets. The room is sparse and white like the rest of the house, with just a desk, a chair, a lamp, and a portrait of Tan that has yet to be mounted. “I like it like this,” he says. His office lamp has a blue bulb, which fills the room with an eerie azure glow in the evening.

Tan’s newly acquired tech toy is a Philip’s light bulb that changes color to any hue on the color spectrum and can be controlled via cellphone, a technology he first encountered in a Paris club some

years ago and thought suitable for hosting guests. In the evenings, the light and airy entertaining space is transformed. “[Perfect] if you have white walls. It has a very dramatic effect and can change the mood instantly.”

AN ENDLESS WORK-IN PROGRESS

Like a mountain that slowly forms inch by inch as plates collide, so too does the minimalist home take its form. “You should never rush a house,” Tan advises. Although he admits he has no particular vision for his house, he likes it that way, “because this really keeps me thinking and makes life interesting.”

Attracted to clean lines and industrial simplicity, Tan groups his favorite chairs at the heart of his home: a Marcel Wanders red Tulip Chair, a reupholstered Japan Surplus chair, and Warren Platner’s iconic Arm Chair.



admiRED

Pam Gonzales Lopez

TAILORED

gets comfortable

TRANSITIONS

with change

WORDS ANGELA MANUEL GO PHOTOGRAPHY JOHANN BONA OF AT EAST JED ROOT



Black cashmere V-neck sweater, **Banana Republic**, Greenbelt 5; black leggings, **Joseph**, SM Aura; black silk robe, **Josie Natori**, Rustan's Makati; black heels, **Roger Vivier**, rogervivier.com

PAM GONZALES LOPEZ is a creature of fluidity, gliding through life strong-willed and undeterred while remaining versatile and open enough to prosper in new experiences. It takes true talent to gracefully weave through years as an industry insider and all-around cultural connoisseur without losing one's self in the process. To be completely candid, Lopez is a pretty tough chick—even going as far declaring we would make this story “rock.”

Like many of the brightest minds, Lopez's artistic endeavors started out bottled-up: “I feel that I've always had [the creativity] in me, but it was never really honed early on as a child. I would paint, I would write poems, but because of a lot of reasons, I really didn't focus on the arts—growing up in the province, it wasn't really a priority.” Despite this, she enjoyed her quiet childhood in the provinces of Davao and Dumaguete and even attributes much of her formation as a person to her upbringing. But still, she opened herself to the thought of greater possibilities. “Even before completing my schooling, I had already made up my mind that I was going to live in Manila or abroad,” she recounts. Literally a day after graduating high school, she left behind her roots with big dreams in her back pocket—and equally big opportunities eagerly awaiting her arrival.

“I really didn't see [moving] as challenge but rather a chance to succeed and make a difference.” Having lived in both the province and in the metro has made her appreciate each other's eccentricities and nuances. “I've always been drawn to striking a balance between beauty and practicality in everyday life.” While she's always had tenacity and sagacity, it was her mindset that paved the way for future success. “When I got to the age of reason, I realized I really liked fashion.” She pauses for a moment to think. “Is that too flimsy?” she quips, “I've said it so many times and don't want to sound so conventional anymore, but I want to be true to myself: I've always wanted to do something in fashion.”

Her first job was part of an advertising team for a local teen magazine where she was able to discover and develop her skills and network, but the real challenge began when she was offered to be the operations manager for a clothing brand. She got her first taste of the retail industry with that stint, but left a little under three years later to venture into a much bigger world. In an ambitious leap of faith, together

with thoughts of the American Dream, she set her sights on further studies at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in Los Angeles. “There are a lot of lessons that you take with you when you venture outside your comfort zone. It's the creative mind in me—I always want to try something new. I know that's not always a good thing, but that's how I operate: for me, it's always about the learning.” After a short-lived stay in the States, she returned to the Philippines where she found herself working in all aspects of the fashion industry: corporate affairs, marketing, merchandising, and public relations, all fields in which she thrived until she decided it was time to take a personal hiatus.

What happened next could possibly be the pinnacle of her creative journey—what she calls her “eureka moment.” One fine day in London, during a period of self-rediscovery, her sister-in-law Maricar Tiangco came up with an idea to launch a furniture and lifestyle line. Lopez has learned the ins and outs of retail through a successful career, but her fascination with home decorating and style remains unexplored. “I think I learned a lot [of it] from my mom's side of the family. Growing up, I always liked rearranging furniture and knickknacks in my grandmother's house. I just knew that I enjoyed seeing things move around and making a space work,” she recounts. And her sister-in-law's proposition, she believes, couldn't have come at a better time. By then, she felt that she had graduated from her life in fashion, which made her welcome the idea of branching out into a new but familiar line of business. “You don't just sell furniture—you need to have that eye. So my background in fashion really plays a huge deal as well, and everything about it is essentially the same. It's an acquired taste; you have to feel the beat of the market as well.”

After much thought and discussion, Lady Scott Jones was born. “We both wanted a name that's both androgynous, edgy yet feminine—[L.S.J.] is this girl who travelled the world; she's able to see what's good out there with her eyes, and share it back home.” And on being newcomers in a highly-competitive market, Lopez explains: “We have a more organic, under-the-radar approach—in fact, we don't consider anyone competition. That's just how Lady Scott Jones is: she has a mind of her own, does things by herself, and just wants to show you what she loves.” Lopez also speaks highly and

humbly of the equal involvement between her and her business partner. “We work very well together,” she says of their dynamic. A perfect balance between her role in creative and marketing and Tiangco's administrative work. “I think for some, it can get a bit tricky working with family, but we established our boundaries early on and it's been great.”

A showroom houses the brand's collections to allow clients to fully experience Lady Scott Jones, but the pair saw an opportunity to explore something that not many local furniture businesses in their class have: online retail. The platform is a favorable choice that allows L.S.J. to serve their market the best way possible; it contributes to exposure and a broader reach, allows them to minimize their overhead costs for better price points, and even gives buyers a chance to browse the products in places and at times that are most comfortable. “We're very chill!” she jokes. “We want the brand to be approachable, homey, and adaptable for anyone and everyone.” In line with these efforts, Lopez is even thinking of furthering her education once more, expressing interest in learning more in the realm of digital marketing. “I've always believed that your taste changes with time as you mature. The more you learn, the more you explore other things,” she notes.

For the entirety of her journey so far, it seems as if moving forward is what Lopez is best at; and nowadays, true to form, she finds herself focusing mostly on the future: being a hands-on mom to her son, looking forward to the launch of the furniture line, and even giving her mother-in-law's stores, the Rustan's Flower Shop and the Gourmet Garage in Subic, a hand in their rebranding efforts. When asked what makes daily life particularly exciting, she simply responds, “It's what you make out of each day that makes it even more interesting, don't you think?”

An innovator in her own right, it is perhaps her knack for formulating concepts and generating new ideas that makes her a visionary. “It's in my DNA to work, it's in my DNA to create things, and it's in my DNA to discover things.” Heeding every detail, cultivating a broad mind, and pursuing novel ideas undauntedly—Lopez has a certain worldliness that affords her the ability to see what others don't. The creative industry is a tricky, curious trade but given her inherent creativity and impeccable taste, it is exactly what Lopez understands most. •



Gray knit turtleneck,
Massimo Dutti, Greenbelt 5;
Les Classiques pearl studs,
Jewelmer, The Peninsula
Manila, Makati City



Shift dress, **Massimo
Dutti**, Greenbelt 5; tan
heels, **Chloé**, chloe.com

attiRED

TRINKET TOWN

Tales as old as timepieces inherited and splurged on

STYLING RIA PRIETO

PHOTOGRAPHY PATRICK SEGOVIA

RING LEADER

“The eternity ring of diamonds. It’s my wedding ring—it symbolizes eternity, no beginning or end,” says a jewelry designer.

Rings and bracelet, all from **Jul Dizon**, EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City; Tank Française watch, **Cartier**, Newport Mall



PERFECT TIMING

“We had been searching for a wedding band in Seoul and in Hong Kong, only to find one in Greenbelt. The minute I saw it, I was sure I wanted it on my finger,” says a womenswear designer of her wedding band, which was flown in just in time for her wedding.

Wedding band, **Harry Winston**, Greenbelt 5; Love ring, **Cartier**, Newport Mall; Deville leather watch, **Omega**, Robinsons Place Manila; Watch Me leather bracelet, **Jewelmer**, The Peninsula Manila, Makati City

MEMORY LINED

“I have this tendency of buying jewelry that evokes a certain memory,” reveals a doctor of her pieces.

Sakura cuff, **Jul Dizon**, EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City; wedding ring, **Janina Dizon**, The Peninsula Manila; Datejust, **Rolex**, Newport Mall; engagement rings inherited from her mother; silver cuff, **Celine**, celine.com

WATCH MEN

“I’ve always dreamt of owning a Richard Mille watch,” says an art collector of his precious piece—a gift to himself on his 34th birthday.

Leather watch, **Richard Mille**, richardmille.com; double loop bracelet and alligator CDC cuff with gold buckle, both from **Hermès**, Greenbelt 3



RING LEADER

A retailer and boutique owner shares, “My dad passed this watch on to me and it has the most sentimental value—I will always be a daddy’s girl.”
Engagement rings, retailer’s own; bracelet, **Janina Dizon**, The Peninsula Manila, Makati City; leather watch, **IWC**, Greenbelt 5



Dine by design: the couple's masterfully curated dining room

inspiRED

ECLECTIC FEEL

Of maximalist tendencies and over a hundred conversation pieces

WORDS TRINA RAZON PHOTOGRAPHY JAR CONCENGCO

DON'T BE FOOLED by the minimalist Asian-inspired water feature out front, because what you will find inside this seemingly conventional bungalow is a total contrast. The scuttering of paws belonging to a trio of Italian greyhounds quickly ushers out the owners, Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre. You might know them as the owners of AC+632 and Firma, stores that sell a melange of interesting antiques and new objects alike. The house itself is an old bungalow, a legacy from Vijandre's family that they have jointly owned since the '80s. When it came to revamping the house, they decided to retain the bones of the structure. "We just made the ceilings higher since the house was like your typical bungalow from the '70s, and we also made the doorways narrower," shares Toledo. With the help of a friend and architect Jim Tan, the couple slowly made the place their own.





Clockwise from top: "Where's my Valentine's gift?" Toledo asks Vijandre while posing for the camera; A perforated wall gives off an interesting light play; The couple's TV room features eclectic chinoiserie. Opposite page: The marbled entrance offsets the tone of the whole house.

Much like their stores, their home is a case of maximalist done right. Nothing in their space feels overwhelming or overcrowded and each piece is given the opportunity to stand out on its own. There are conversation pieces all over the house, guaranteed to make even the most tight-lipped guest succumb to curiosity. "We love old things because they tell a story. Sometimes we even like to make up the stories ourselves!" the couple jokingly shares. It's easy to see why: the TV room (incidentally the most used room by the couple) houses an actual elephant's foot from the Victorian era, and right across the room sits a rare taxidermy fox cub ("We named him Lucius!" says Vijandre) while miniature portraits made from mammoth tusk hang from the walls. When asked how they decide which pieces to keep or send off to AC+632 and Firma, Vijandre



exclaims, "With difficulty!"

One thing that really stands out in the house is the couple's collection of paintings that are all portraits. Vijandre and Toledo jokingly share that it must come from the frustration of not having a portrait of their own. "I was supposed to have a portrait done of us with the dogs for Chito's birthday but, to cut the long story short, things with the artist didn't push through," says Toledo.

Decorating each room will always be a constant work in progress but Toledo and Vijandre are doing it beautifully. Filling their space with storied objects from travels around Europe and Asia truly spells the difference between a house and a home. •

TECH TALK: #CES2015

Tidbits from the yearly trend convention

WORDS TERESE MELISSA YAP



AUTOMOBILE

MERCEDES F105

It seems that driving will soon be a thing of the past as Mercedes introduced something straight out of science fiction. The F105 concept car features a roomy lounge interior that seats four passengers and is surrounded by a digital display topped off with autonomous driving. We wouldn't mind sitting in traffic in this car.



LIFESTYLE

GARMIN

In line with the newest "it" tech to hit the market, Vivoactive has built on its Vivofit sports band, making it your all-around lifestyle companion. With a built-in GPS and Bluetooth feature allowing you to connect to your smart phone, it has all the features of a sports band while also updating your calls, emails, messages, and calendar notifications.



LIFESTYLE

MELO MIND

The gadget does as its name suggests. Melo Mind is a brain-scanning wearable tech that will keep you calm and relaxed. Not the only one of its kind at this year's CES, it seems people now need the aid of technology for relaxation as well. The Melo Mind transmits the brain's waves via Bluetooth, reading its neural activity and translating it to the language of music.



MUSIC

KUBE

The perfect party companion, the Kube is simply a refrigerator with speakers. The portable Bluetooth speaker can blast up to 100db while full of ice and drinks. The entire box is 23x13 inches, weighing around 9kg.

DESIGN

TAO CHAIR

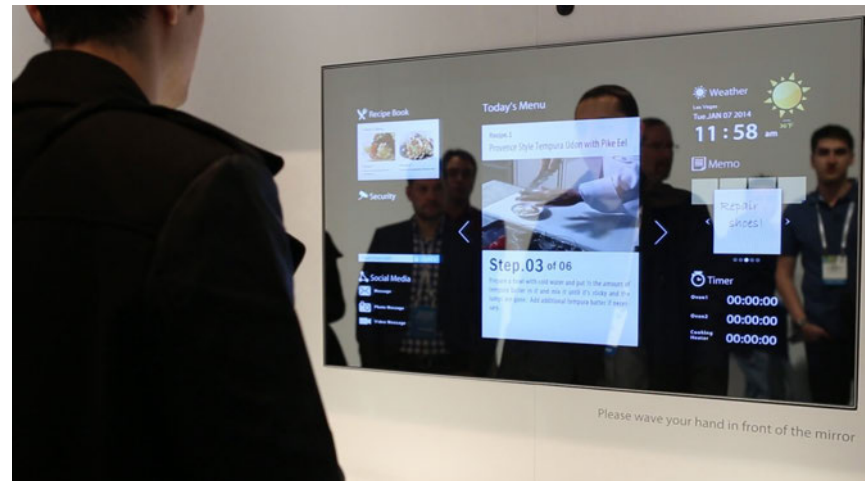
Technology is truly about comfort. The Tao Chair allows you to go to the gym without having to get up. Simple and sleek in design, it looks like a regular piece of modern furniture but it is so much more than that—with fitness sensors running through its interiors, the Tao Chair allows you to sit back, relax, and start working on your muscles.



LIFESTYLE

BEAM

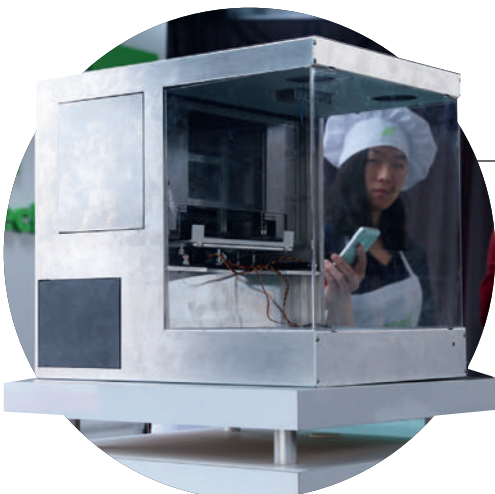
Beam is a remotely controlled communication robot. A smart presence device from Suitable Tech that allows you to be in two places at once. It's a lot like Skype but with a roving option allowing you to explore and be in an event (or in the office or in a meeting) from the comfort of your own home.



BEAUTY

PANASONIC SMART MIRROR

Have you ever looked in the mirror and seen all your flaws? The Panasonic Smart mirror does just that—it will not only “helpfully” point out all the areas for improvement but also tell you what products you can buy to “fix them.” How’s that for a magic mirror?



FOOD

COOKI

In a world constantly hustling and bustling, there's nothing better than a home-cooked dinner at the end of a long day. As good as this sounds, the act of cooking a warm dinner doesn't exactly have the same appeal as eating one. Cooki the robo-chef is happy to do the work for you. The process of meal preparation by this robot is as simple as selecting a recipe and throwing in the ingredients. Cooki has perfect timing—it adds, heats, and stirs everything into a meal and sends you a text message when it's time to eat. *Bon appetit!*

exploRED

BOLIVIAN BIJOU

A treasure trove at 12,000 feet

WORDS MARA SANTILLAN MIANO PHOTOGRAPHY SARA BLACK

“The women have very tan skin and a lot of fine lines on their faces, because the sun is particularly strong in this altitude.”



Dried goods: only a tenth of the many items for sale intended for more enchanting matters

“**T**hey serve you coca tea at the hotel when you arrive,” says Sara Black, who had trooped to Bolivia’s government capital. It was a necessary stop to get to Salar de Uyuni, the world’s largest salt flat where the sky and clouds reflect majestically onto the pool of brine—a photographer’s dream, of which story she’ll tell another time. “It was interesting to see how people live in the capital though. It is such a stark contrast from Uyuni.”

The coca tea is for altitude sickness. The air is thin flying into La Paz—best known for its high topography—so there is an immediate adjustment tourists have to make. Black describes the view driving into town from the airport as beautiful, with scenic mountains covered in short-story buildings and dwellings. It is much like Baguio, she says, with the weather and slightly provincial feel. She adds with a laugh, “Downtown is also very hilly, and [certainly] the thin air doesn’t help the huffing and puffing.”

What fascinated her most were the body shapes of the women. “I know I’m kinda weird that way,” she smirks. The typical Bolivian woman’s body is short, stocky, and round, which she dresses up with a long ankle length skirt and a top that covers the rest of her up. “It is so interesting to see how the landscape and climate has affected their outward appearance.” The women have very tan skin and a lot of fine lines on their faces, because the sun is particularly strong in this altitude. They wear their hair long, usually with two braids down their back. “It is absolutely fascinating, very antithetical to the way we portray femininity in the West or pseudo West, as we simply mimic the West here

in the Philippines, with the hourglass body shapes, a pronounced waist, long flowing hair, and fair skin.” Black proudly shares that her experience of traditional Bolivian women in La Paz expanded her concept of femininity—something she is known to advocate, ever since her first photography book.

And of course, one cannot complete a trip to Bolivia without visiting its unique, unnerving markets, which offer a darker culture amid the rest of the world’s rapid globalization. Black talks particularly about the Witches’ Market. She tells, “There were a lot of dead/dried animals for sale, to be used for offerings and such. I was really tempted

to buy this candle, which you can use to cast a spell with, but I was too scared of karma.” She resorted to getting her niece a flute, more difficult to play than the usual, and Black wonders if it has any magical properties. Her shopping tip? Bargain half off. “South America is very much like South East Asia in that sense.”

Nevertheless, whether you are enthusiastic about trinkets and souvenirs and such, Black recommends visiting the markets just to let your eyes feast on the sights. “The colors and textures are uniquely Bolivian, and that was the experience I had wanted to have.” •



CHINESE WHISPERS

Cantonese cuisine comes clean

WORDS PAM CORTEZ PHOTOGRAPHY ARTU NEPOMUCENO

THERE ARE COMMON misconceptions that often come with dining in a Chinese restaurant: that there will be MSG and with it, that heavy, heart-racing feeling, and the dangers of oil and fat permeating whatever dish you order. This blinds diners with a view that most or all Chinese dishes are unhealthy, making them avoid even the best establishments.

But Lung Hin, Marco Polo Manila's flagship Cantonese restaurant, will change whatever notions you may have had, and make you realize you've been missing out on bold, intense flavors and sincerely delicious dishes.

Since Lung Hin opened a few months ago, the restaurant has fast become the favorite of both those who are fans of traditional cuisine, and the more adventurous. In a restaurant scene littered with new spots that attempt way too much, forcefully fusing modern ideas and concepts with classics, Lung Hin is a rare breath of fresh air that manages to balance things perfectly. At its helm are young chefs (one of whom has come from a Michelin-starred restaurant) who respect tradition but use a more candid approach, an explanation for why they have become so popular so quickly. Case in point: fried garoupa balls that are accented with black truffle

and traditional puddings made with avocado and candied walnuts.

Lung Hin's take on traditional Cantonese fare is done so with precision, with flavors that are incredibly clean. Their dim sum buffet is a steal at P900, especially with the high quality of food the place has become known for. The all-you-can-eat selection includes steamed and fried dim sum, soups, noodles, congee, and desserts, assuring a full meal and your money's worth.

There are many standouts, with some of their dishes easily being the best versions in the city. Some prefer their barbecued pork buns to that of an infamous foreign chain: tiny golden things that embrace a filling flavored so it is the right balance of sweet and savory. A classic spinach and shrimp dumpling comes with a skin that is both sticky and thin, showcasing the skill and technique of the kitchen. Radish cakes are a favorite too, with their version of XO sauce embracing the gelatinous

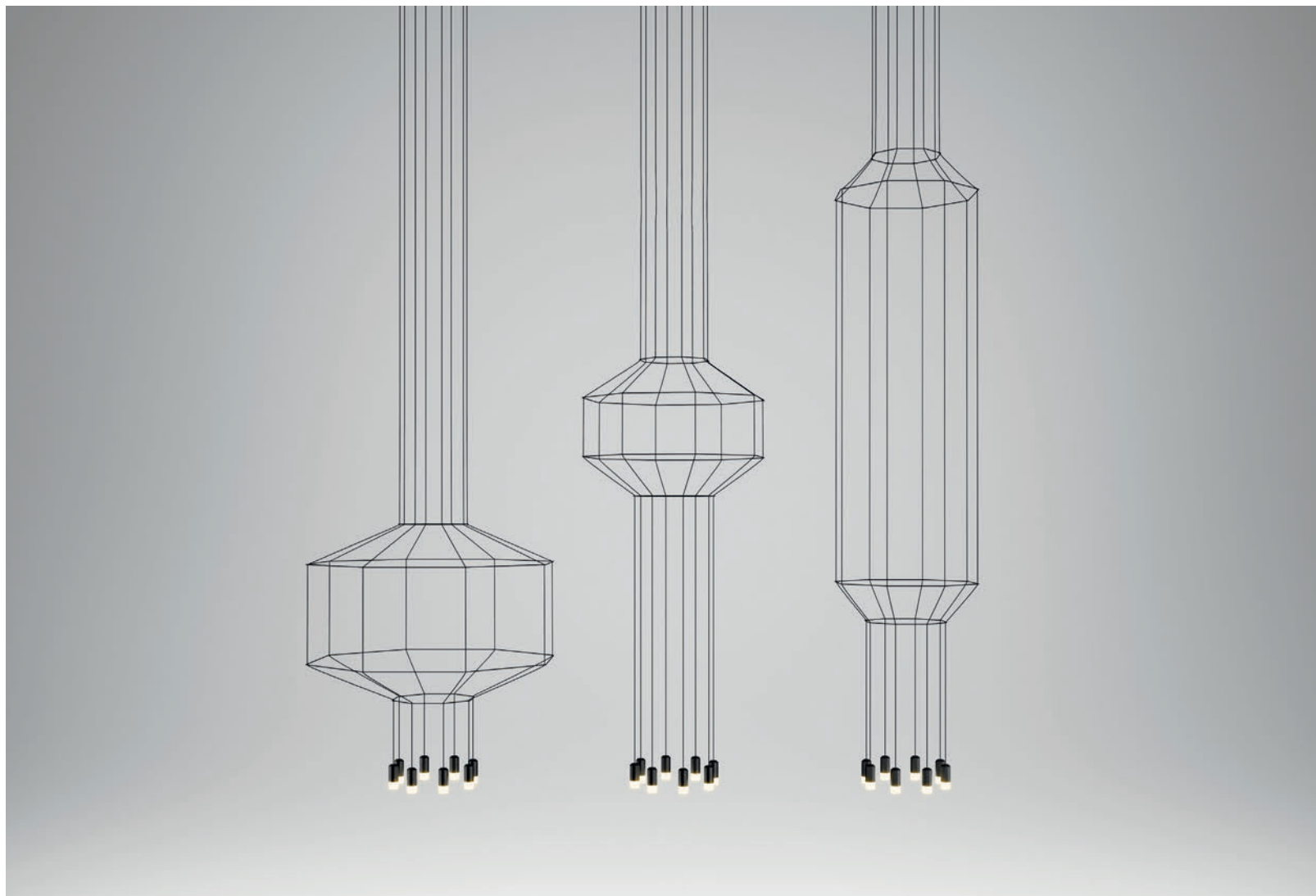
cubes with a gentle kick of heat. Seemingly ordinary eggplant comes stuffed with a delicate minced pork, covered in a tausi sauce that brings out the inherent sweetness of the vegetable. There are hardly any licks of oil left on the plates, with the ingredients respected and cooked to showcase their unadulterated flavors; even deep-fried dumplings taste more of their fillings than oil, which is often the case.

Lung Hin, when translated, means dragon pavilion, and with walls gilded and painted to look like dragon scales, it seems as if you were dining in the belly of the beast. According to lore, dragons bring good luck, fortune, and prosperity, and in such a well-appointed dining room, the clichés are almost true. A meal at Lung Hin always ends with you dining well, so well that it might just erase whatever MSG-riddled meals you've had in the past. •

HAKAW HITS

Their hakaw is an exceptional version, with plump shrimp and an enticingly thin exterior.





acquiRED

FUTURE PERFECT

On home innovations and futuristic furniture

WORDS LOREN SEÑERES

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE CLASSIC CHANDELIER, Designer Arik Levy conceptualized Wireflow for Vibia. Exercising a confident restraint when it comes to aesthetic, the light installation proves itself considerably powerful despite its minimalist look. Crafted with fine cables to embody a futuristic finish, Vibia's Wireflow establishes itself as an easy piece to add to one's residence with its LED bulbs and insane efficiency levels (it's currently graded A++).

Revel in the elegance of sound design while



From top: Wireflow light installation, **Vibia**,
vibia.com; BeoSound Moment System,
Bang & Olufsen, Shangri-La East

you're at it with Bang & Olufsen's BeoSound. Boasting a delicate touch wheel and a wooden finish, BeoSound's appeal to audio connoisseurs is unparalleled. Having access to more than 70,000 radio stations and the capability to match music with the user's mood are its feats worthy of attention. The BeoSound Moment also showcases the highest quality of performance a 2.1 speaker could give: high-res MP3 music and FLAC playback in its purest form—perfect for a night spent lounging at home.



empowerED

LOCAL LOVE

Swim Philippines president Dimples La O's anthem of giving

WORDS MEG MANZANO PHOTOGRAPHY ARTU NEPOMUCENO

“THE GUY BLOW DRYING my hair took forever,” offers Dimples La O, fresh from the salon a hundred meters away from Swim Philippines’ headquarters in Alabang. Bathed in a spell of morning sunshine, La O arrives clad in a geometric white dress and flats. “I saw one of the guys you featured was wearing a *barong*,” she exclaims. “I panicked!” Two minutes into the conversation (30 seconds of which reserved convincing her that the dress looked gorgeous on her), La O rushes up the concrete flight of stairs

and then almost immediately back down. “Okay. I think this is more me,” she declares—breathless but comfortable.

You started Nothing But H2O fresh out of college...

I was 19! Seriously, I didn’t know anything but it was the right time because my parents were very supportive of business.

Did you always want to be involved with the business of fashion?

I knew I wanted to be in retail. I grew up

doing visual window displays, dabbling in merchandising, production—that’s how I spent my weekends.

We take it swimwear was a response to a need?

I couldn’t find anything to wear that I was comfortable in and neither did my friends. Whenever I would go to the States, I would also be asked to buy swimsuits and I figured, why don’t I just make some? In 1997, we opened Nothing but H2O. Literally, whatever we had made, we just put on the shelves. We started small and it was



"All our designs usually start with a beach destination in mind; from the beaches of Southern California to the islands of Greece."

TRAVEL



"Pinterest is what Lauren (my designer) and I use to collaborate on our thoughts and themes, from swimwear to store designs."



APPS

actually a great learning experience because I did everything. From sourcing, designing—I didn't really have anyone with me aside from my mom and my then boyfriend, who is now my husband. Looking back, a few years ago the market was 90 percent one-piece suits and 10 percent bikinis...

There was even a tankini phase!

There was! No one was wearing bikinis back then because there was just no other choice. Starting the brand meant giving more options for people to be more comfortable and to love their own bodies and skin. People were selling skin whiteners, and we were here trying to convince everyone to love their tan!

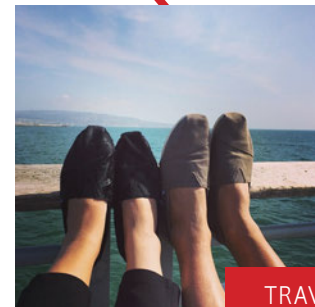
Aside from designing and producing swimwear, you ventured into distributing shoes.

In the beginning, no one knew what TOMS was—some people didn't even believe that we were giving another pair to charity! We started with shoes but after a year, it just took off on its own. By the end of 2010, we were clamoring for stocks. TOMS started out as a shoe company but it's fast become a "one for one" group. Every year, they come out with a new product like eyewear, coffee, and now it's bags. If you think about it, TOMS is really about a world traveler, someone who goes around and leaves something good behind. They actually coined the phrase, "vagabond philanthropist."

What's new with the Give Project?

With every purchase of a bag, you can help ensure a mother safe childbirth. Through the organization Every Mother Counts, they give sanitary birthing kits and provide training for birthing as well as build birthing centers. Now they're working with

Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. What's great about TOMS is it influences us to find avenues to give back as well. We wanted to see how we can go a step further. After Typhoon Haiyan hit, it made that specific need more realistic for us. On our end, we came up with the Haiyan Initiative where we looked for artists and local industries that have been affected by the typhoon and sort of come up with products that can be bridged to TOMS. There are eyewear cases made by mothers from Eastern Samar that are given with every eyewear purchase, and it's good because we can provide these women with livelihood. Another product is our Haiyan shoes. We partnered up with this artist named Boy-o who came to Manila and spent hours just painting on shoes for us. It's really a different way for us to carry out the cause and have these people a part of the creative process of a project that will benefit them.



"My TOMS Classics—super comfy, easy to take off when going through security, and really light so you can pack as many as you want and it won't dent your baggage allowance."

TRAVEL

"I collect small plates from my travels; my most recent one is a small zebra plate I found at the Jonathan Adler boutique in London. It's great to put by the bed for small things like jewelry."

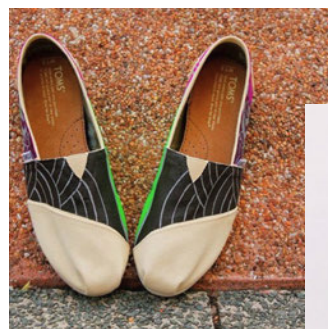


"I just get a bunch of these and voila! breakfast."



BAG RAIDER

"We just wanted a way to give back and have people more aware of what's happening," says La O of handpainted pair of TOMS by Boy-O from Guiuan.



ANTHEM



Eyewear case made in collaboration with Banago for #tomsphilippines



A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME - WITH RIMOWA

The 1920s marked the beginning of modern air travel and the golden age of Hollywood. In 1919, Hugo Junkers presented the world's first all-metal commercial aircraft. It was made using the aircraft aluminum alloy discovered by Alfred Wilm in 1906. In 1950, RIMOWA presented its suitcase with the unmistakable grooved design made of the same material – at the time, it was the lightest suitcase in the world. RIMOWA was a real pioneer in the sector, starting the trend for lightweight luggage back then.

