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**designBUZZ**

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The Escalera  
Timida ladder (in  
foreground) and Pala  
Rampante shovel in  
wood and metal are  
an artistic take on  
utilitarian objects.

# artist AT WORK

ART AND DESIGN MEET IN ARTIST-DESIGNER PABLO REINOSO'S POETIC SCULPTURES, WHICH WERE CREATED SPECIALLY FOR SINGAPORE.





Pablo Reinoso sits on La Cinq, a sculptural chair designed to induce movement in still urban environments. *right* The Chaise Patras is a tribute to what Reinoso describes as the "world's first iconic chair design".



photo ART PLURAL

Frederic's instinct more than my own. I wanted to introduce some wood-craft culture and show the viewers a little bit of what I design."

### ON THE SCULPTURES

Inspired by nature, the works are made of bronze, wood, steel, aluminium, metal and vegetable fibre. The fluidity and complex geometry displayed by the pieces mimic natural, organic evolution – a sort of self-growth process in which each piece dramatises its surroundings, even though they are stationary.

Consider Reinoso's poetic adaptation of the classic No.14 Bistro chair by Thonet. "It's a functional chair, but if you look at it from an artistic point of view and can't sit on it, it still remains a chair," he says. "I haven't changed the very essence of the design, but rather re-interpreted an established perspective."

Of the Chaise Patras, a wooden chair with multiple backrests representing the "various stages of movement", he says, "Nothing remains the same forever, so it's important for a designer to be able to add and create something new. It's okay to make mistakes." So, if the extensions jutting out from the chair or the bench seem like a mangled mess to you, you're questioning the object and its purpose before you explore the not-so obvious dimensions. Reinoso's amazing proclivity to creating hybrid designs that look absolutely natural is perhaps why he is so highly sought-after by famous galleries and museums around the world.

The 8 Bench, which explores the relationship between art and design, is a site-specific installation for Singapore inspired by the infinity symbol. With the prototype currently on display at the gallery, Reinoso hopes it can be turned >

**W**ould you regard a chair you can't sit on and a ladder you can't use as design or art? Perhaps both? Referencing our perceptions of how they should look and "behave" are 15 sculptures by Franco-Argentine designer Pablo Reinoso. The artist was in town recently to present these pieces, which were commissioned by Art Plural Gallery, owned by Swiss art dealer couple Frederic and Carole de Senarclens. The pieces were exhibited at the gallery in conjunction with the annual Art Stage Singapore event.

Having designed diverse products for several high-profile brands such as Loewe, Givenchy and S.T. Dupont, among others, the designer is well-regarded for his clean and fundamentally sound ideas. Reinoso treads the line between art and design effortlessly, although he believes there is a need for a clear distinction between the two. Here, he sounds off about his work, making mistakes and why Philippe Starck is overrated.

### ON DESIGNING FOR SINGAPORE

"I like to create site-specific installations," says Reinoso. "When I was approached to develop a concept for Singapore, I did some research on the country as I had never been here before. This project was largely intuitive, and I followed



in to a large-scale monument and displayed in a local setting. This can perhaps be attributed to his training as an architect, giving the artist-designer an astute capability to create objects with a proportionate sense of scale.

### ON THE BALANCE BETWEEN ART AND DESIGN

An artist at heart with an eye for good design, Reinoso goes everywhere with a sketchbook and is a self-confessed workaholic. Ask him how he manages to strike a balance between art and design, and he is quick to reply, "I don't try to strike a balance. There is a strong relation between function and intellectual need. An object might not have or even need both." By his own admission, even while sitting on the fence between design and art, Reinoso states that he isn't partial towards any one medium. Rather, it depends on the purpose of the project. "I've had my moments of doubt but in the end, I decided that poetry was better than function in this instance," says the mild-mannered designer, referring to the exhibits at the gallery.

When it comes to design, Reinoso prefers to optimise the function of the object in question. "I like to solve the equation. When I am hired

as a designer, I don't try to bring art into it. For example, the Salif juicer by Philippe Starck is very difficult to use. It's an iconic piece, but one that reflects bad design. Starck communicates well through design, but not if your commitment is towards creating a good product with clever functions," he says without hesitation.

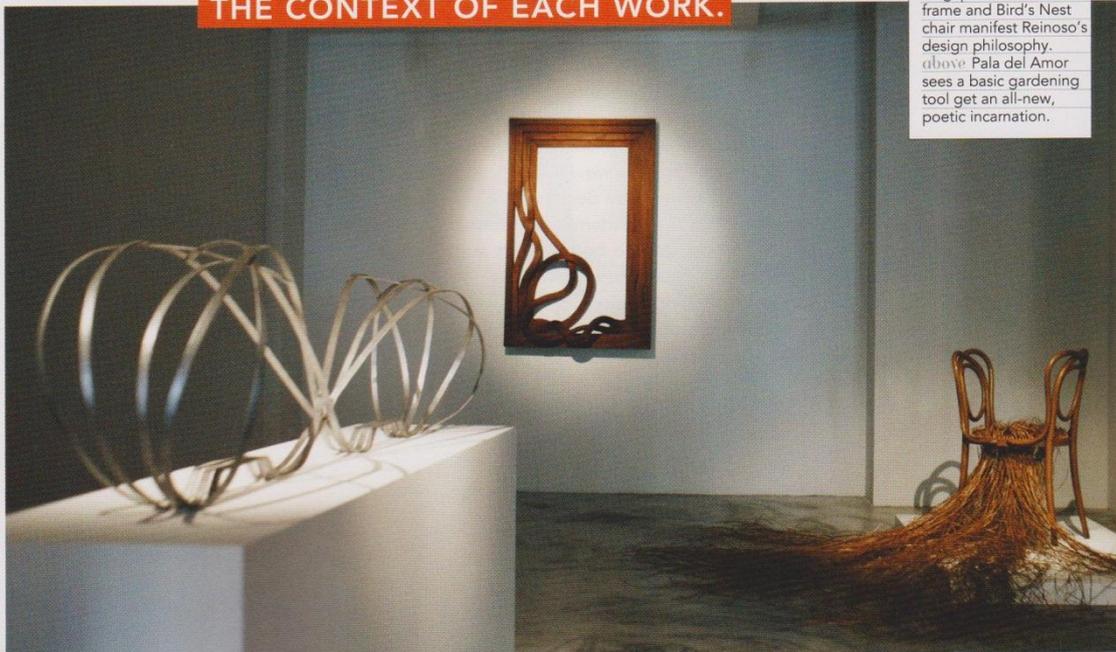
### ON HIS INSPIRATIONS

"Everyone has masters – people who, in a passive way, influence their work strongly. For me, it's individuals like Gerrit Rietveld, who changed the way people looked at furniture; Michael Thonet, who subconsciously created the first design object – the No.14 Bistro Chair – and Charles and Ray Eames, who came up with several good designs. Of the contemporary designers, I admire Konstantin Grcic's work.

"There is a silent dialogue among designers, and we're always trying to figure out what our peers are thinking," says Paris-based Reinoso. "I love to work and I'm honoured to be able to create something new everyday." ●

**Pablo Reinoso: A Solo Exhibition is on from now to March 3 at Art Plural Gallery, 38 Armenian Street. Call 6636-8360 for enquiries.**

## REINOSO TREADS BETWEEN ART AND DESIGN, AND ALWAYS CONSIDERS THE CONTEXT OF EACH WORK.



The 8 Bench (a site-specific installation for Singapore), Cadre Iroko frame and Bird's Nest chair manifest Reinoso's design philosophy. above Pala del Amor sees a basic gardening tool get an all-new, poetic incarnation.