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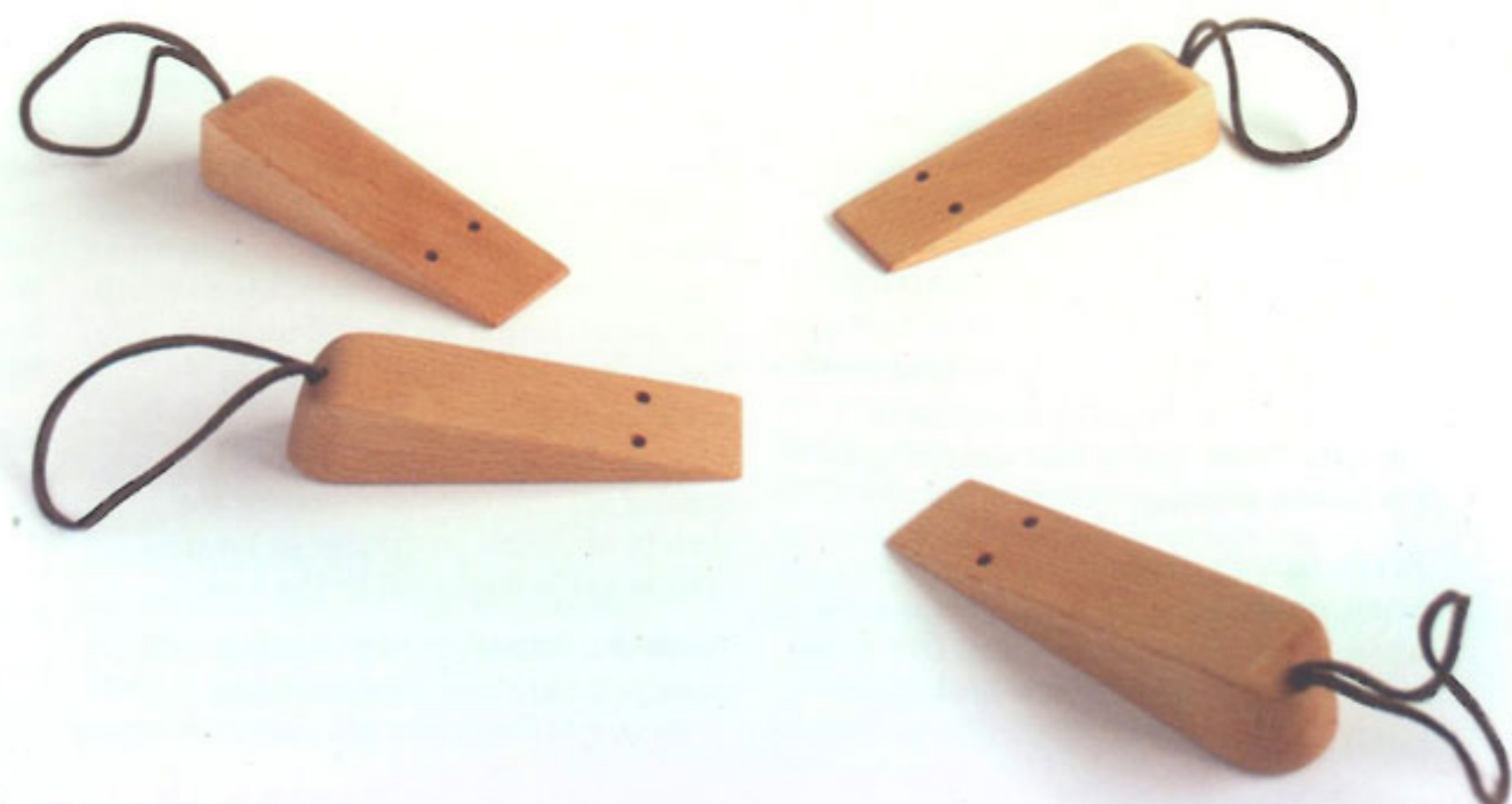




WOOD x TEN

WORDS BY CHRIS JACKSON

Above: Nina Tolstrup/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Bird Feeder*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano
Right: Carl Clerkin/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Doorstop*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano



Left to right: Sam Johnson/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Dumper*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano
Tomoko Azumi/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Transport Lamp*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano

Gitta Gschwendtner/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Wedge Car*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano
Michael Marriott/TEN/ twentytwentyone/Crafts Council, *Coathook*, 2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano

TEN is a group of 10 designers who are united through the shared vision of founder, Chris Jackson. The TEN designers collaborate once a year to create products that reflect the TEN ethos, that is, to take a responsible approach to design that offers a timely antidote to society's high levels of consumption and throw-away culture. WOOD is their latest project on sustainable and ethical design. Chris Jackson shares his experience with Object.

In 2006, when I first sat down with nine other designers in the studio of Tomoko Azumi to discuss a project idea that I had in mind, I was focused on a single exhibition at 100% Design in London. Little did I know that nearly four years after I had conceived of the project through a combination of travel (a two-week holiday in Goa, India) and frustration (the insincerity of sustainable design initiatives at this time) that I would be writing about the project's latest incarnation, WOOD.

Ten was the 2006 project, and it invited ten London-based designers to give their perspectives on the subject of 'Sustainable design'. The collective were given a budget of £10 (sterling) and a radius of ten kilometres from their studios to find materials to produce objects. The designers included Michael Marriott, Tomoko Azumi, Gitta Gschwendtner and



Above: Héctor Serrano/TEN/
twentytwentyone/Crafts
Council, *Do not lose me*, 2008.
Photo: Héctor Serrano

Héctor Serrano, and the objects that were produced illustrated ten varied approaches to sustainable design that were ripe with humour and intelligence.

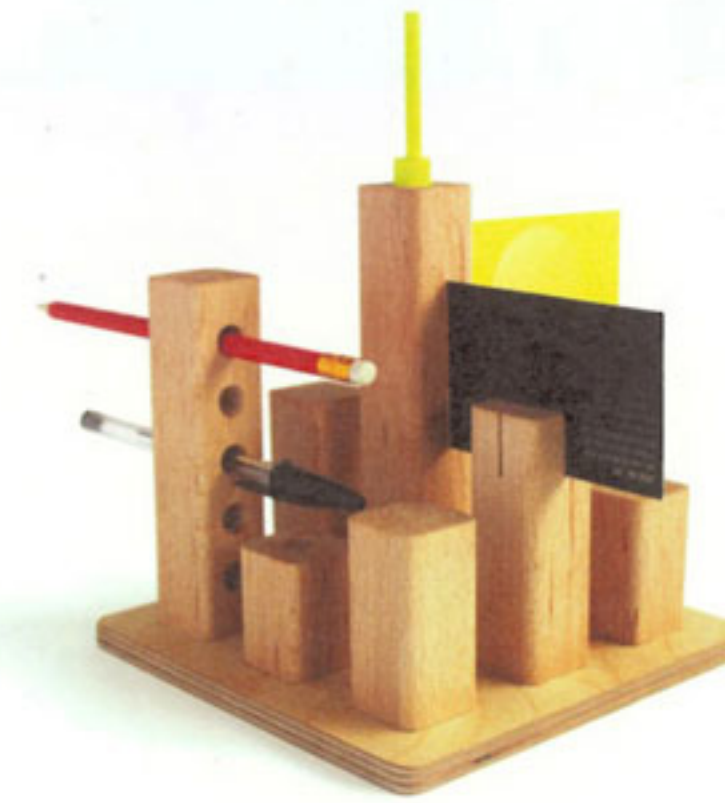
Ten won two awards that year, including 'Best Contribution', and was well received by designers and members of the public alike. We achieved a lot on a miniscule budget, and our success meant that we received a free stand for the following year. At this point I left England on a year-long trip with my wife, eventually landing where I currently live and work, in Wellington, New Zealand.

In my absence the reigns of the project were taken over by the ten designers, but particularly driven by Nina Tolstrup and Gitta Gschwendtner. In 2007, 'Ten Again' asked designers to find, create or curate ten objects related to sustainability.

In 2008, WOOD was the logical development of two projects that had been concerned with concept and content, over any market-driven concerns. After the success of the previous two years, we gained a retail partner in the form of TwentyTwentyOne, with funding from the Crafts Council.

The aim of WOOD was to utilise a material that was ecologically sound, and to produce a range of objects for the home, to be distributed and sold by TwentyTwentyOne, and manufactured by an ethical toy manufacturer in the south of England.

Initially a promising and exciting project, the project was hampered by various problems with manufacturers and materials. The idea of local manufacture and sourcing of products is a noble one, but many UK-based manufacturers appear



Left to right: Chris Jackson/
TEN/twentytwentyone/Crafts
Council, *Writers Blok*, 2008.
Photo: Héctor Serrano
Onkar Singh Kular/TEN/
twentytwentyone/Crafts
Council, *A4 Wood*, 2008.
Photo: Héctor Serrano
Stephen Bretland/TEN/
twentytwentyone/Crafts
Council, *Trestle candleholder*,
2008. Photo: Héctor Serrano



wary or blatantly uninterested in supporting projects that ask for low-volume batch manufacture, and many do not hold full FSC certification. Our problems continued when, four weeks before the exhibition, the manufacturer that we had originally partnered with pulled out of the project. The designers (including myself, on a three-week holiday in the UK) were subsequently left to produce their own prototypes in time for the show.

Many of the designs are responses to the workshop capabilities of the original manufacturer, some relate to 'toys' in their aesthetic and construction, whilst others investigate ideas of extended use and recycling. A common theme throughout the collection is the celebration of wood as a natural, sustainable material.

To design ten products that hold together as a collection, have sufficiently personality to be attractive to buyers, can sit well in a retail environment, and be produced at a reasonable price in the UK appears to be an impossible conundrum in 2009, but three out of four isn't bad and we will be launching the collection through a German manufacturer later in the year.

We are currently in the process of finding funding for Ten 2009, which will (hopefully) see the Ten project working with a digital manufacturing partner and returning to a more conceptual framework.

Maybe only digital ideas are truly sustainable! ○

WOOD will tour to Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen, Wales, UK from 11 July – 29 August 2009.

Chris Jackson is founder and one of the TEN Designers. He conceived, curated and organised the first award-winning Ten Project in 2006. Chris is also Senior Tutor in Industrial Design at Massey University (NZ). He was recently awarded second place in the Vibe Furniture 'store-it' design competition, run from Sydney, and one of his most recent works was chosen to be shown at ICFP studio in New York in May 2009. www.northwards-design.co.uk

TEN is:

Tomoko Azumi
Stephen Bretland
Carl Clerkin
Gitta Gschwendtner
Chris Jackson
Sam Johnson
Michael Marriott
Héctor Serrano
Onkar Singh Kular
Nina Tolstrup