

A traditional Emirati neighbourhood in the heart of Dubai [hh7](#)



# house & home



The design world's finest pick their favourites from 2009 [hh4-5](#)

58

The length in metres of the first **WHY**, the yacht-cum-floating island collaboration between Wally Yachts and Hermès. With its 38-metre wide stern, the flying wedge shape may look strange but it marks a major change in thinking about yacht design

60

The number of people, including three Grand Masters, who played chess matches in London's Trafalgar Square in September, using Jaime Hayon's giant ceramic chess pieces. That's a tiny number compared with the thousands of spectators who came to watch the five-day event

11

The number of years it took the British architect David Chipperfield to conserve Berlin's Neues Museum, brick by brick. Shattered by bombs during World War II, this important 19th-century neo-classical building is now a stunning blend of old and new



# Top designs of 2009

Design shapes our environment and the things around us so, with this in mind, **Yvonne Courtney** invites key figures within the regional and international design community to nominate their top designs of what has been a particularly challenging year for everyone – including designers

## Rami Farook, the founder of Traffic, Dubai

It wasn't the best year in design – from what I saw in Milan, too many people seemed to be in denial. They need to innovate. Vitra was considered, and launched one solitary product, contrasting with other companies that launched nearer 20. Companies that the previous year told me they would be looking to produce more affordable designs, did a 360-degree turn by taking the limited editions route.

But I think that **Konstantin Grecic's Monza chair for Plank** (image 1) was special. So was the **Tout Va Bien cabinet** by the French graphic designers, Antoine Audiau and Manuel Warosz, for Bd Barcelona – which mixes applied arts, hieroglyphics, contemporary graphics, fantasy and optimism – and **James Clar's Sugarcube light**, for its sheer simplicity and because it was designed here in Dubai, making it something personal and special.

## Sebastian Conran, product designer, Sebastian Conran Associates

The **Dyson Air Multiplier fan** (2). I am a great fan of Dyson and think that this is one of the best products he's ever designed. It's an elegant and beautiful object – one of those designs I never knew I needed. Now that I have one, it is indispensable, and eco-friendly too.

**Zaha Hadid's Maxxi Museum in Rome** (3) – Zaha is probably the most innovative contemporary architect. Brave, bold and female. Her latest museum is her greatest triumph yet.

I'm a real cycling enthusiast but sometimes the hills can be a bit of a sweat and the **GoCycle electric bike** (4) takes the problem away. It's such a beautiful object, with an Apple level of detailing, that I wish I had designed myself – and it encourages me to cycle when I might otherwise have taken my motorbike.

## George Katodrytis, an associate professor of architecture, American University of Sharjah, and Founding member of the AAUAE

For my favourite projects of 2009, I propose three of the most extreme spaces I have encountered this year, which represent what I think are possible new directions and sensitivities for design in the Gulf. The desert road in the UAE – an endless environment – as the ultimate space in the UAE; the Jerash

Palestinian Camp in Jordan, known as the Gaza Camp – a forgotten city of "living dead"; and **James Turrell's light installation** (5), currently at Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in Germany.

## Marcus Fields, editor-in-chief, Dezeen online design magazine

The **Real Time** project by **Maarten Baas** stretches to breaking point the fast-blurring distinctions between industrial design, filmmaking, art and performance. It's an astonishingly ambitious yet exquisitely realised body of work that addresses the way that our perception of time is changing in an ever-faster digital world. Yet **Real Time** is also a groundbreaking work of industrial design – it is, after all, a range of functioning clocks.

Designers don't spend enough time trying to improve the little niggly everyday things that really affect our quality of life, such as electrical plugs. The clever **Folding Plug** by **Min-Kyu Choi** is easy to travel with and also allows several devices to be plugged in without messy cables and bulky multiple sockets.

Hi-tech fabrics, explained with poetry and clarity by a new generation of cutting-edge Japanese designers in the **Senseware** exhibition (6) at this year's Milan. Curated by **Kenya Hara**, it showed how technology doesn't need to be baffling or frightening and can instead be calming and humane.

## Deyan Sudjic, the director of The Design Museum, London

**Zaha Hadid's Maxxi museum in Rome** (3). It's not a great name for the best building yet in Hadid's career... but the dynamic promise of the early drawings is now fully realised.

The **Magno radio**, designed by **Singkih Kartono** (7). Every year the Design Museum hosts the Brit Insurance Designs of the Year, a look at the world's best new work. The **Magno** radio beat all comers in the product design category for the way that **Kartono** used his skills to create a seductive modern product that could be manufactured in village workshops to create jobs.

**David Chipperfield's reconstruction of Berlin's bomb-shattered Neues Museum**, derelict since World War II, took 11 years... a painstaking flake-by-flake treatment that captures the qualities of what has been lost. **Chipperfield's** approach is changing the architectural weather.

## Omran al Owais, the founder of the Dubai-based architecture studio, Centimetre Cube

My **MacBook Pro** by **Jonathan Ive** and his team at Apple. What can I say – unlike most PC laptops, none of the **NASA** switches exist on a Mac laptop, they look simple and cool. What's even cooler are the materials, such as the aluminium and glass finish, which also makes it recyclable, so more environmentally friendly.

The **Enertia Power Cycle** (8) by **Brammo's** in-house designer **Brian Wisman**. I haven't yet met the bike in person, but I'm in love with the machine. A great morning toy for a busy city... perfect for a dawn workout, and to help reduce all the haze and pollution from the **AMG's** and **Porsches** clogging up the roads of Dubai.

The **Caja House** (shown on the cover) by **Estudio**

**Aire** in Argentina. This is a very Emirati home. It addresses many issues, such as privacy, the inward courtyard and the open/shaded spaces that make it ideal for the UAE's balmy months. Its design might be a bit cold, but with an Arabian touch, such as wooden pergolas and palm trees, this is a module that every home owner here could base their home on. All the government housing projects could learn from this, and reduce build waste – by building something modern, efficient and related to our culture.

## Rabih Hage, architect, interior designer and gallerist

The **WHY** yacht/floating island by **Wally Hermes Yachts** (9). The **Catastrophe Vase** by **Maxim Velcovsky** (10) and my reclaimed Chinese chair called **Comfortable Relations**. Why do they stand out? Because all of these designs are the very sign of our times. The

confusion and the mix of luxury with the futile and ephemeral mark the start of a new trend that will last for the next decade. It is *wabi-sabi*. Remember, Japanese culture has been here before any other culture. Look East. Also, these designs are obvious designs, yet no one has done them before. To me, great designs are not specially new shapes but new visions.

## Lina Kanafani, the owner of London's design emporium, Mint

My favourite Royal College of Art graduation project was **Fabien Capello's** furniture, based on the waste generated by Christmas: in the UK 1.8 million Christmas trees are thrown away every year. **Fabien** collected discarded trees and, using simple tools, created a series of unique, handcrafted stools and side tables. **Konstantin Grecic's Table B for Bd Barcelona Design** (11): stunningly versatile, for indoors or out, it represents industrial design at its best – taking ad-

vantage of new developments in technology in combination with manual processes.

**Richard Hutten's Playing with Tradition** carpets took a traditional design with fairly common motifs and, by simply altering the patterns, transformed it into a modern and very pleasing piece of design. Although digital technology was vital to create the design, the carpets are hand-woven or hand-knotted on looms, using local materials and, most importantly, respecting the dignity of the labourer.

## Omer Arbel, architect and industrial designer

I like the **Houdini Chair** by **Stefan Diez** for **e15** (12), not only because of the graceful marriage of craft and technology, but also because it has an aesthetic awkwardness, which I find refreshing. Too many of today's objects aim to look light and sleek but the **Houdini Chair** is not afraid of being a bit heavy.

The **Libri Shelf** by **Michael Bihain** for **Swedese** (13) represents a clever idea about a shelf. Its functional agenda is also its aesthetic agenda – therefore it's a piece of design of great economy and grace. I also like that it was picked up by **Swedese** as a prototype by a relatively unknown young designer. I'm always happy when I hear that large manufacturers are still able to take this sort of risk.

The work of **Barber Osgerby** has a hidden aesthetic language. If you were to place, side-by-side, objects designed by them in the last five years for different manufacturers, they would appear to have been made by the same producer. I like this because it shows a consistent aesthetic intent. In the case of the **Lanterne Marine** vases for **Venini**, I enjoy seeing the **Barber Osgerby** geometry applied to fine Murano glass – and the colours are astonishing.

## Younes Duret, product designer

I particularly like the rubber **Bookmark II**, designed by **Propaganda's Ankul Assavaviboonpan** – because it is something very simple and functional... almost obvious. You simply wrap it around your book, not forgetting to move the indicator arrow to the last line you read.

The **W hotel in Hong Kong**, designed by **Nicholas Graham** and **Yasumichi Morita**. I particularly like this hotel because it is a real work of global design, where you can see a perfect consistency in volumes and spaces. A very nice aesthetic set against the incredibly atmospheric backdrop of "eastern Manhattan".

The **Bloomframe** (14) is an innovative window that magically morphs into a balcony at the touch of a button. This product is a perfect solution, both aesthetically and technically, for enjoying a balcony in our cities as they become more and more crowded.

## Maurizio Ribotti, the CEO of Design Partners and Zona Tortona, which is held alongside Milan's Salone del Mobile

**Paolo Ulian's Drinkable Watercard** (15) is an ethical project consisting of a postcard that brings with it, not only greetings but a small quantity of bread or a glass of water. It is interesting the way **Ulian** plays ironically with normal daily objects – this product is a symbol itself and shows the importance of communication through product design.

The **Skins footwear** concept by **Dror Benshetrit**

(16) demonstrates an innovative use of design and technology to create a unique product.

The shoe is composed of two separate but interchangeable elements: the outer part and the bone that cradles the foot. It's interesting to see how the use of technology in materials has been engineered into a pair of shoes.

Car design has long been one of my interests and **Walter da Silva's Audi A5 Coupé** is a prime example of supremely functional, technically innovative and contemporary car design – both externally and internally. I'm therefore not surprised that **da Silva** won Germany's Design Award 2010.

## Nigel Coates, architect, furniture designer and professor of architecture at London's Royal College of Art

Picking up on the famous chess set in **Marostica, Veneto**, **Jaime Hayon** developed giant pieces for his **Chess Set in Trafalgar Square** (17) that were a perfect vehicle for his bonkers and beautiful surface decoration. With big blobs of white on the black pieces and black on the white pieces, this fabulous totemic reinterpretation of traditional chess pieces was a clever way to bring his work to a mass audience.

Although a bit of a curate's egg, the **Super Contemporary** show at **London's Design Museum** was great to be part of. The idea was to show how London has nurtured a creative community that continues to rival all other design capitals. My **Battersea Gods Home** was one of 15 pieces commissioned from some of London's most dynamic creatives who, as a group, demonstrate diverse approaches to design.

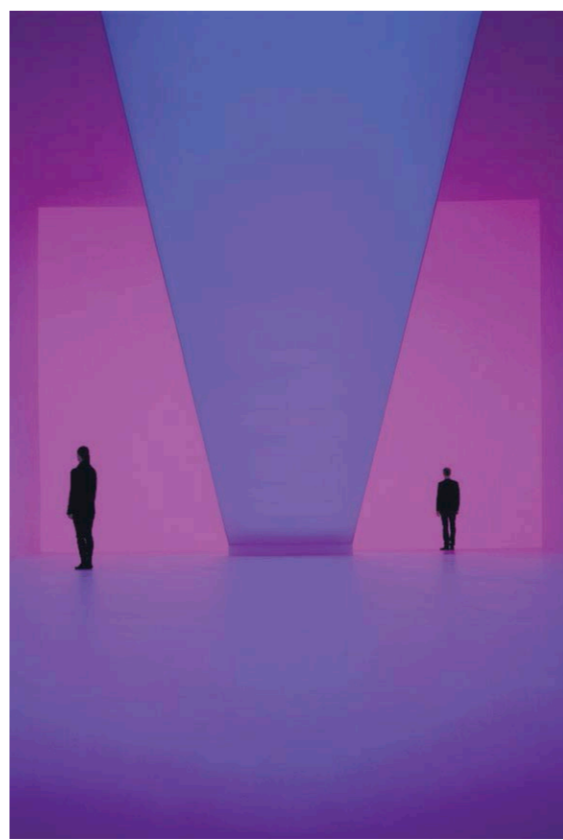
Although designed in 1997, the **Maxxi Museum of Art in Rome** (3) is **Zaha Hadid's** largest and most public building so far. Although probably heavier on the exterior than she would have liked, the immense galleries have an air of motion that is closer to railway lines than a traditional *enfilade*. Complex central stairs attach themselves to various gallery levels like strings of melted cheese. It's hard to imagine how the art will cope.



6



3



5



17



9