

SALONE DEL MOBILE SPECIAL

MONOCLE



Bending: the truth
How Bonacina turned working with rattan into a signature style.
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ABOUT THE WRITER
Simpson is a writer at MONOCLE. Despite studying a master's in international conflict studies at King's College London, he is equally adept at analysing conflicts within architectural projects.

ESSAYS

Constructive construction

CONSTRUCTION / GLOBAL

By working with their own in-house building team, architects can deliver more co-ordinated, efficient results.

Writer Jack Simpson
Illustrations Paul Zullo

Characterised by seemingly off-the-wall design decisions, crossed wires and separating sites that could follow a design-build process. Traditionally, projects of making that to, well, build them. The result is a way of making that can result in a disconnect between the architect and the creative process, leading to a terse relationship. It can also present headaches for the client, who has to liaise with both the architect and builder, or even launch their own design firm – to find



Orchestrating a project

ARCHITECTURE / GLOBAL

Harmonising the soundtrack with the physical space is key to building the right atmosphere – but creative should get with the tunes.

Writer Russell Hoar

Music and architecture are inextricably entwined. One can't have the other. As an architect, I've always felt more inspired by music than by architecture. Other creative professions, such as fashion, have far more confidence in their connection to music but the link with architecture is less defined.

This might seem surprising when you think about the way that our eyes and ears work in tandem in physical spaces. It's a relationship that means a room or building can shape the way you appreciate a piece of music and, in return, it can influence the way you look at and appreciate design.

At Soda, the architecture practice I co-founded with Laura Satriani, many of our projects feature social spaces, particularly those geared around hospitality or work. These settings contain multiple ingredients that contribute to the atmosphere, and music is a key one. As such, music – both in what is played and how it will be used – is a consideration of every one of our projects.

For example, for Sessions Arts Club in London, a new restaurant we created in an 18th-century courtyard. We curated a playlist with Rob Burns from recording studio Ten87, which allowed us to manifest our sonic ideas about the ability of building's atmosphere to change. The restaurant has two distinct personalities, depending on whether diners are having lunch or dinner. The daytime is soundtracked by '90s' a delicate piano piece by the British multidisciplinary artist David Timothy that works beautifully alongside the daylight streaming through the upper-level windows.

ABOUT THE WRITER
Potter co-founded Soda Studio in 2012 in order to embrace more diverse forms of design and to show that creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit can go hand in hand.



SALONE DEL MOBILE

Get with the program

TECHNOLOGY / GLOBAL

Modern notions of craft pay no heed to advanced technology. But why can't it be used as a helping hand?

Writer Elio Restinghi

The standard definition of craft today has remained in the past; it refers to design done by hand when tools were limited. It's an outlook that begs the question: where do advances in technology come in? What if as our arms and hands or other tools – can be viewed as a scary prospect but we cannot live in the past and be afraid of technology, because technology is not the problem. Rather, it's how we choose to use technology. And there are young craftspeople out there fearlessly using technology for craft, while also keeping traditional techniques alive. This concept is explored at the Fondazione Riccardo Catella as part of the Design Festival during Milan Design Week. The show examines emerging designers and artisans who combine traditional expertise with innovative design pieces.

These techniques span from the application of coding and 3D printing to glassblowing, casting and moulding. To create this work, many of the designers exhibit talent to practicing craftspeople to see how they work with old techniques and tools that might not even be produced any more. It has resulted in a show that pays homage to craft traditions that might not be centuries, while also showing how new generations of designers are building on and shaping these into fresh and modern pieces of design. It shows that we can be creative by experimenting with technology to achieve a new craft with new materials with technology to achieve keeping traditional techniques.

This link where young designers adapt craft traditions to new technology, is important because I see you need to know where objects come from and how they're built, instead of just designing on a computer in 3D. This way of thinking allows craftspeople to reach for something better that hasn't been done before.

"There are young craftspeople out there fearlessly using technology for craft, while also keeping traditional techniques alive"

The value in this is a competitiveness that is built into the practice of craft. We have to understand that we are moving faster in how we are producing. Technology can help craftspeople to maintain pace with modern, fast-paced price for crafted items, because time is one of the most costly changes in the production of craft pieces. Without fast production methods, craft is too slow to compete.

All of this is tied together with a sustainability thread – one that's about sustaining culture and tradition while also understanding technology and how we can uphold tradition, learn from it and use new technologies to help ourselves and, most importantly, redefine what craft means in 2023.



ABOUT THE WRITER
An architect by training, Restinghi is co-founder of Isola Design Festival. The exhibition *Fast & Craft* will be on show at the Fondazione Catella during Milan Design Week.

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ESSAYS

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CONSTRUCTION / GLOBAL

By working with their own in-house building team, architects can deliver more co-ordinated, efficient results.

Writer *Jack Simpson*
Illustrations *Paul Thurlby*

Characterised by seemingly off-the-wall design decisions, crossed wires and despairing sighs that could blow a house down, the relationship between architect and builder can be a fraught one. Traditionally, projects follow a design-bid-build process. It's an approach in which the client seeks separate architects and contractors, then the architects draw up plans and builders bid to, well, build them. The result is a way of making that can result in a disconnect between the construction and the creative process, leading to a terse relationship. It can also present headaches for the client, who has to liaise with both the architect and builder. A potential solution for those looking to commission – or even launch their own design firm – is to find



creatives who can do both. Typically referred to as design-build – or architect-led design-build – this process involves the architect being more-or-less constantly present on site and working closely with their own builders, in contrast to monthly site visits and solving problems over email. With this method, hassles around the delivery process are limited, fostering a more co-operative and streamlined approach that benefits all facets of a project's delivery.

For proof of concept, one only has to look to Gluck+, an architect-led design-build firm based in New York. Under the direction of principal Stacie Wong, the firm has delivered works that range from grand residential towers in New York to educational buildings for institutions such as Duke University, all without the typical friction of traditional projects.

"Communication is the critical aspect of architectural projects," says Wong. "By combining both the construction team and design team, they become jointly and inherently responsible for finding solutions together." This, she says, maintains the quality and design intent that clients expect, with resolutions found before money has been spent. And while it's a boon for those who are commissioning works, it's also beneficial for architects, giving practitioners more tools to solve problems. When architects work with builders who are part of their company and on the same team, on-site issues can be solved as they arise and crucial construction snags are more likely to be flagged earlier.

"There's no project that can't be bolstered by this approach," says Wong, adding that there can be a huge upside for non-profit initiatives with limited budgets. "With design-build, designers are better able to calculate how to balance strict budgets and necessary design with tall aspirations." Considering this, it might seem strange that design-build firms are something of a novelty, given that they can counter inherent flaws in the design-bid-build process with clear lines of communication. Here's hoping that more clients demand such a process from their architects – and more architects build it into their practice.

ABOUT THE WRITER

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