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Art Central Spotlight: OrangeTerry

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OrangeTerry is an industrial designer and artist based in Hong Kong who exhibited at the Karin Weber Gallery booth at Art Central 2025. Much of his work focuses on sculptures made with “final objects,” which refer to items perceived to be at the end of their life cycle. Through his practice of “post-industrial design,” OrangeTerry’s visually-captivating showpieces give disregarded items a new meaning as they’re shown in a new light.

His most recent showing at Karin Weber Gallery’s booth in Art Central is a sculptural piece dubbed *Copper Wire*. While working in his studio, Terry suddenly heard loud banging behind his workshop. Heading downstairs to explore, he encounters a couple who run a small recycling business operating out of a humble warehouse. There, they were in the process of separating the plastic shell from the copper wire.

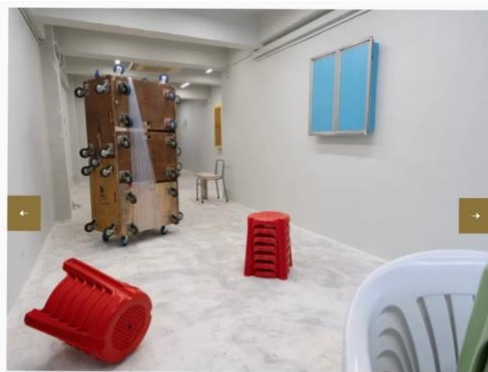


OrangeTerry, *Copper Wire*, found copper wire, 55 x 50 x 25cm, 2025.

While unraveling, the copper wire tumbled and intertwined, forming shapes reminiscent of pom-poms. Jumping in to help, Terry later bought a bundle from them at its recycling value. Copper is quite sharp so the best way to transport it is to fold everything into a round shape. Terry found that the shape itself represented their labour wisdom and that the overall aesthetic was quite beautiful from both close and afar. To him, the object exemplifies the spontaneity and randomness of post-industrial design and production.

"I was actually thinking of naming this piece dust because in small quantities, you won't notice it, but when it keeps tumbling, you begin to pay attention," says OrangeTerry. "I wanted to create art using this very simple motion and aesthetic, highlighting the beauty in spontaneous creations. There doesn't need to be any reason or meaning necessarily behind it. It's simply a recognition of the couple's wisdom and efforts."

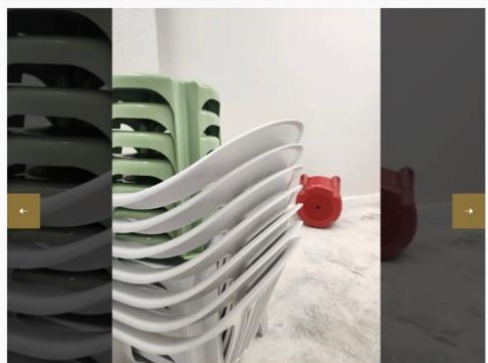
To understand more about the artist, we visited OrangeTerry at his solo show dubbed "Over-Resourced," which highlights the overconsumption in Hong Kong as well as the widespread eagerness to discard rather than fix or upcycle despite a surplus of usable items. One of OrangeTerry's most recognisable pieces at his exhibition is *Singular Stack #1*, a Mono Block stool made from red dai pai dong chairs. The piece was made to highlight the paradox of abundance, where having more makes it easier to use less efficiently.



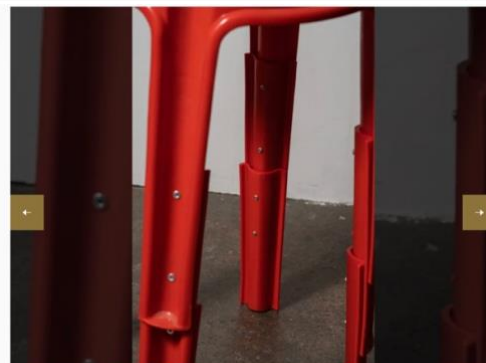
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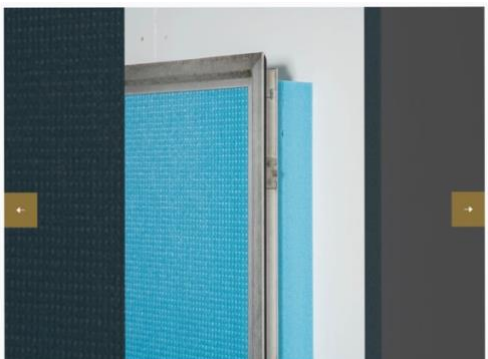
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The space also features a DJ booth lined with vintage speakers scavenged from Sham Shui Po, a rolling crate made of wood dolly trolleys, a USB holder made using throw-away hooks containing tracks from various DJs from Hong Kong, and other creations made with final objects.

Head below as OrangeTerry shares with us his unique observations, design philosophy, and more.

What was your approach for the “Over-Resourced” exhibition?

Some of the works may seem like I haven't done much, but what I appreciate is that more isn't necessarily better. A lot of the time for creation, there is beauty in spontaneity and randomness that I like better. For example, there is a series of works that I enjoy from a group from Japan in the '60s called The Gutai Art Association, which is often compared to minimalism and Arte Povera, or “poor art.” Part of their philosophy is that you don't need a reason to create. The roller cart piece was made simply because I needed a container to carry everything.

Outside of creating exhibition pieces, do you still practice industrial design?

For the exhibition, I'm still doing industrial design, but this time it's post-industrial design. In Hong Kong's design world, I'm not necessarily celebrated or welcome. Some might think — this isn't really industrial design, isn't this more on the art side? Or sometimes I'll think, I'm still doing industrial design, so what am I? Over the past 10 years, I've really admired Dutch design. One of the groups I've been paying attention to is Droog Design. I like what they do. Because of my interest, I went to Spain and the Netherlands to do an internship for a year. There, the Droog founder established a school called Design Academy Eindhoven.

That's where I met Alice Wong, the curator for Karin Weber Gallery. I told Alice, ‘Maybe I'll take this show as a short course.’ She's the curator but also my mentor. It's my solo show, but I also approached it as a lesson.

Where's the line between design and art?

In Hong Kong, it may be more black and white, but in Europe, the gray area between art and design is quite broad. That made me realise that I didn't need to define myself too much. On the flipside, if people think it's art, it can be, but in my mind, it's design. Does design need to be mass-produced, or does it need to have clients? I don't think so because design is a methodology to contextualise what you want to say.

The chairs I made actually aren't worth that much in terms of material but when you insert your point of view and context, it holds weight. It's no longer just a chair you see at a dai pai dong. So I believe art and design don't need to be so clearly defined. I enjoy exploring fluidly in the gray area between the two.

You've done quite a few large commercial projects now. Could you share how they came to life? How do they differ from your solo works?

Yes, I've done one for RIMOWA, adidas, and various shopping mall developers. When approaching these projects, I take it as a practice. It's quite different from doing my own projects because for commercial works, you need to understand what your client wants to do. They don't necessarily need you to speak for their brand or say what they want to say. They perhaps just want you to bring a fresh perspective or add on to what they haven't seen before. However, in this process you must understand where everyone's boundaries are. For example, for a developer, your message can't be new buildings isn't good. Or for RIMOWA, you can't say travel is

not eco-friendly. For commercial projects, the goal is to break through within a boundary and not harm or offend those involved, working under the shadow while having fun. For my projects, I can say what I want.

What led you to want to work with final objects?

Because Hong Kong is full of waste. I recently connected with another artist from Indonesia. He also works with final objects, but the way he works and how I work are very different. He might pick up some chip bags or plastic bottles, but won't pick up chairs. To them, chairs are still something that can be used, but in Hong Kong when you walk past a trash station, you'll see a lot of people throw away chairs.

Things you're sure to see at a landfill include chairs, mattresses, cabinets, tables, and bags of clothes. These materials are extremely common in Hong Kong but I believe in various developing countries, these may be considered treasured items. Things that would be resold or reused for many cycles. In Hong Kong, if you set the price at zero dollars on Carousell and search for a table or chair, you'll find a lot.

In Hong Kong, it's easy to buy these domestic objects. We're close to mainland China, which supplies a lot of these objects and materials for us at a very low cost. When people choose between repairing an object or buying a new one, most people decide to go for the brand-new option. That's why we have so many IKEAs in Hong Kong. In different cities, they may just have one, but in a city as small as Hong Kong, we have 4.

Why is that? Because we throw things away very quickly. I like to work with final objects because I simply don't need to buy new materials. Picking them up is easy enough. I know being over-resourced is not a good phenomenon, but in Hong Kong, being over-resourced is part of our landscape. You'll randomly see a lot of throw-away chairs at a bus station.

The bus station may already have many chairs for people to sit, but for some reason, there are still a few domestic chairs for people to sit because there are people who think: 'I don't want this chair anymore, but I don't think it's used enough to go straight to the landfill. I'll put it in a place where it can still be used.' A lot of the inspiration for final objects often comes from observations I make on the street.

Why do you often use Hong Kong-associated objects?

The first year I came back from studying in Europe, I thought, 'how come during my years living in Hong Kong, I didn't notice any of these familiar objects. It's because when I lived abroad, I became accustomed to the foreign landscape, and when I came back, I had, for a moment, a tourism perspective. I came back and kept taking photos.

If you look at all my creations on Instagram, it all started when I came back in '19. The reason is, I want to keep that tourist perspective and view even though I'm local — I grew up here, studied here, and work here. Through this perspective, a lot of interesting things emerged. Even if a foreigner looked at my work, they may be able to tell that this is a Hong Kong artist or designer.

Biggest inspiration?

Places where people dwell. Hong Kong has many abandoned bunkers and those areas but I think places where people live and do activities are more lively and have more inspiration. I very rarely think of ideas just behind a computer screen. When dreaming up my solo exhibition, I would ask friends to go walk around in Sham Shui Po, North Point, or Sha Tin's Lek Yuen to see how other people live. 'Oh, so people in Sha Tin will use a water hose to use as their planter.' That's one idea or inspiration. During setup, when I transport things on the van, I'll talk to the delivery driver and I'll share stories with them and that will stir up some inspiration. So my inspirations always come from areas where there is human activity.

One mode is where I'm an observer, and the other is as a participant. For the Art Central piece, I was more of a participant where I helped them fold the copper coils. The coil I ultimately chose was one I helped fold.

Could you summarise your design philosophy?

I think a design becomes alive when it has something to say. As long as it has something to say, it deserves to stay. I made all these designs and creations because one day I'll pass away and I want to leave behind something to prove that I've existed on this earth. Maybe one day this audio recording will disappear, but this chair I created will still be here. I think putting my thoughts and ideas into something inanimate can allow me to keep living on forever. So my thought is that designs that have something to say are alive forever.

What does this exhibition mean to you, and what's your favourite piece thus far?

Up to this point, my favourite design might be my work, *Flat View*. This solo exhibition summarises my last 10 years of contributions and personal development. It's not a retrospective but a summary while moving forward. In the last 10 years, I've done some things that aren't entirely honest because design isn't always honest. For commercial work, I often speak for a certain value that isn't necessarily mine. I'm not necessarily lying or holding different beliefs from my clients, but it's not honest in the sense that it's not my message being conveyed. I'm conveying their message because there's a monetary benefit, so that isn't the purest and most honest expression.

I think that for creation, only when you're honest can people fully feel your thoughts and emotions. I'm not sure what you feel when you look at the window, but when I look at it, I can appreciate every detail. When I added the foam, I magnified the defects and history behind the metal frame, which is a very honest expression. I'd choose the window and the crate as my favourites because they express the honesty that I've been searching for. Through these two works, I've found that honesty, and I'll continue to pursue that in my future works.

Was the blue of the window intentional?

Yes, I wanted to guide the viewer to see something more natural, like the sky or the sea.

What's something that you still want to do?

One thing I want to do in my lifetime is a permanent public sculpture. Put it in a park forever, because a lot of these objects I've created may move and be stored somewhere else. They're still mobile and fluid. If I can do this, I can die happily. I think it would be a huge milestone for me.

In your opinion, what's an artist or designer's role in society?

Inspire others. Everything we see around us was made and thought up by creators. Why are Western churches sharp while Chinese houses are usually flat? To connect with God, some may dream of a long building that can touch the sky, while traditional Chinese designers may think they don't want to go against God, and they may keep their designs flat. Someone thought of that, and every creator inspires others' imagination and perception of the world. When I make these objects, it's for people to use while reminding them that every day, we live in an over-resourced world.

Maybe one day, some affluent individual may buy my work and think, 'yes, we do live in an over-resourced world' and start up a foundation. I made these objects so people can be inspired. Even though what you see is a cheap monoblock chair, someone put a lot of energy into designing and manufacturing it. For the cart sculpture, you may not find it beautiful, but you may start to appreciate the labour wisdom, and the beauty in that. As a creator, I hope to unveil that hidden beauty in the world.

Image courtesy of the artist and Karin Weber Gallery.

Note:

The information in this article is accurate as of the date of publication.

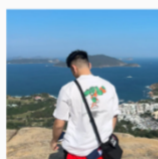
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KARIN WEBER GALLERY

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