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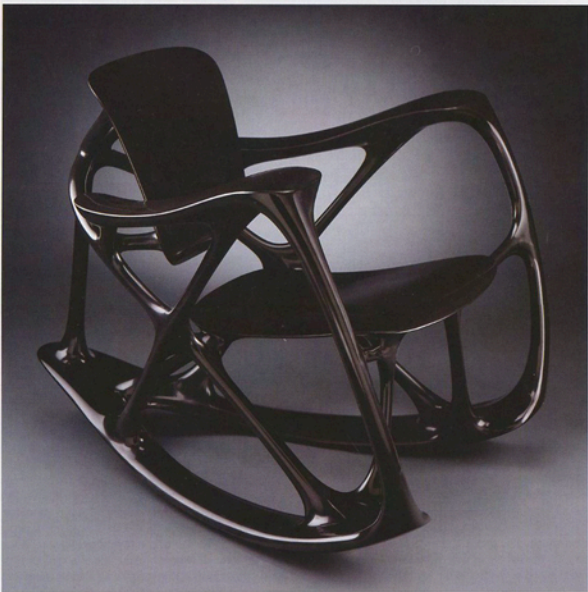
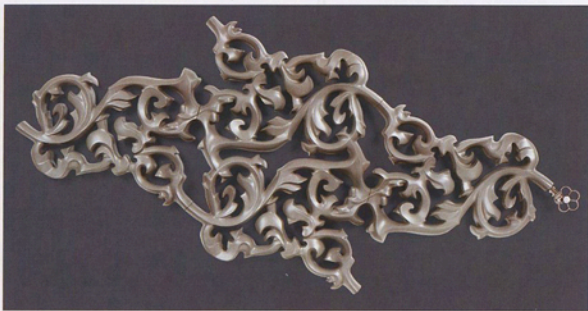
JORIS LAARMAN: THE DUTCH DESIGNER AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME

Born in 1979, Joris Laarman is one of a generation of designers who achieved great success immediately after graduation. His work is presented in the best collections around the world. After a year of fine arts, he entered the renowned Design Academy of Eindhoven and graduated in 2003 with an auspicious project: the prototype of the modular radiator *Heatwave*. Originally entitled *Reinventing Functionality*, this model was later produced in a limited series in collaboration with Droog¹ and Jaga.²

Fascinated by the technological possibilities of the radiator, Laarman juggles ornamentation and functionality with flair. With *Heatwave* (ill. 1) he updates the traditional shape of the old-fashioned heater and gives it dignity. The curlicue shape was inspired by the acanthus leaf motif made popular by the Rococo style; its whimsical look has aroused new interest in today's designers. The radiator is made of polymer concrete – a blend of minerals and synthetic materials – and the water circulates through a flexible stainless-steel tube inside it that follows its curves. Available in several formats and two colours (pebble grey and matte black), it is fixed to the wall like an artwork instead of being hidden away in a corner of the room. Its branching structure creates a wide heat-emitting area and its decorative shape appeals to a taste for innovative design.

In 2003, Laarman set up his studio, bringing an approach that is both practical and poetic to focus on the architecture and creation of its products. He attracted international attention again with a collection of chairs inspired by the evolutionary biology of human bone structure. A contemporary take on the old-fashioned rocker, *Bone Rocker* (ill. 2) is the fourth in the "Bone" series, which stands at the cutting edge of technology, science and design. It was designed using an algorithm³ that translates the evolution of bone structure while making allowances for the design and the material used to make the chair. *Bone Rocker* is made up of a series of branches of varying thicknesses that provide maximum strength and load distribution while eliminating superfluous material. The chair is composed of a blend of Mazy black marble powder and resin that has been poured into a mould comprising 170 components manufactured by rapid prototyping. The process of assembling the mould, casting, drying and polishing (over 300 hours) the chair was carried out in Laarman's studio over a period of many days. The rocker was produced in a limited edition of twelve copies and three artist's proofs.

DIANE CHARBONNEAU AND VALÉRIE CÔTÉ



¹ Founded in 1993, Droog is known as a conceptual design company. It has played a major role in promoting Dutch design on the international stage.
² Jaga is a Belgian firm specializing in the manufacture of radiators.
³ The algorithm used was invented by Claus Matthiak, a German scientist. It was adopted by Opel, the automobile manufacturer, to increase resistance while ensuring an economic use of materials.

Joris Laarman (born in 1979)

¹ *Heatwave Radiator*, 2003, polybeton, 100 x 200 x 6.5 cm
 Produced by Jaga N.V., Belgium
 MMFA, purchase, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Employees' Fund and
 Galerie Arte Montréal Fund

² *Bone Rocker Rocking Chair*, from the "Bone" series, 2008
 Cast marble resin, 10/12, 68 x 88 x 92 cm
 MMFA, purchase, Edith Low-Beer Bequest