과학과 사랑에 빠진 다자이나
아미드 니델란드의 장편소설 '두드뢰호의 빈티지'의 한국어판 출간을 기념한 로즈가의 오디타르 이지아니가 안건은

이의 10년간, 고마운 둘의 사랑이 풍부해진다. 이의 사랑이 탄생한 이유는 '동물 음악'이 있기 때문입니다. 두드뢰호의 빈티지로

고대 시대의 악기와 현대의 도구를 뒤섞어 만든 이악기의 고유성에 감동받은 다자이나의 사랑은 둘의 삶을 더욱 풍부해줍니다.

과학과 사랑에 빠진 다자이나는 도드라지 않고, 사랑의 끈을 끊어내는 두드뢰호의 빈티지의 이야기를 전하는 것입니다.

여자 사랑은 왜 불가능할까요?
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A designer who has fallen in love with science

The designs by romanticist Joris Laarman, who combines the spirit of Droog, the essence of Dutch design, and scientific curiosity, may one day change the world.

Editor / HyeJung Yoon

He arrived looking like a handsome leader of a high school band. Dressed in jeans, a simple navy sweater, grey knit jacket and mismatching Vans sneakers, his style was as impressive as his ‘baby face’. His name is Joris Laarman, possibly the most promising designer in the Netherlands. Whether he is a good-looking man born in 1979 or a father of a 12 week old daughter, it probably does not matter. What I want to tell you first is that he is a designer who has the most brilliant idea among the designers I have met recently. Even when Financial Times appointed him as a ‘designer who expanded on the territory of design’ (his work was mentioned along with Marcel Wanders’ VIP Chair, Philip Stark’s Louis Ghost Chair, Campana brothers’ Favela Chair, and Ron Arad’s Lolita Chandelier), or when he was selected as one of the ‘Innovator of the Year 2011’ by The Wall Street Journal alongside Ai Weiwei, I was not convinced what was so innovative about his work. Nevertheless, when the sensuous designer suddenly turned into a geeky scientist as he showed endless data saved in his computer, I was infatuated by how his stories unfolded like Sci-Fi movies that I could never imagine in the language of design. Laarman, who calls his studio as a ‘lab’, invented works such as Bone Chair shown in this exhibition in Korea. This chair, which looks like an organic material that has evolved gradually, much like an majestic tree grown from the soil, directly shows off his romantic nature—a ‘love triangle’ between science and design. I met with Joris Laarman who has a solo exhibition at Kukje Gallery until January 26th.

What processes do you go through to work with the underlying codes of Mother Nature?

First of all, I’m not just a designer who makes sketches and objects that look good. I often collaborate with many engineers or scientists. Here, this person wearing strange clothes is a scholar who has researched the growth of bones and trees. The bone is much more intelligent than we realize. It has the ability to optimize itself by filling in the spaces if necessary and removing if not required. This is only applicable to the structure of bones. What I mean is that bones are evolved and modern. And to expand on that principle, software using a complex algorithm was created and applied to the works.

The first impression upon looking at your work is like seeing a living organism. Do you think it appears that way because it borrows on the process of formation rather than simply mimicking the shape of the bones?

Probably. This is how the Bone Chair was created. I first made a hypothetical block, and like a bone, all unnecessary parts were taken away. It was fun because no one knew how the details will come out until the completion, since the software does the work. In other words, if a chair was created naturally based on the fundamentals of nature’s evolution, it would look like this.

Does it mean that the computer program designs the chair, not the designer?

No, it is like playing table tennis between me and computer, so to speak. To me, a computer
is a tool like a carpenter’s saw or a hammer. I believe that the work is created through an amalgamation of handcraft and digital work. I create the surface texture, seat, and back of the chair. In this way, the two different working styles interact with each other. 92 molds created for the chair are printed by a 3D printer. This is then followed by a tremendous amount of manual labor. It took around two hundred hours just grinding and polishing to complete the chair.

It feels like I’m looking at a very futuristic sculpture and part of the realm of science at the same time rather than a work of design.

The objects that we make always have roots in design’s historical context, such as Art Nouveau and Jugendstil. My work can be seen as a high-tech version of these movements. As you know, Art Nouveau was influenced by nature more than any other art historical movements. If nature made its own design, then I believe that it will have the details seen in my works.

What are other works that were made following this process?

This is a snapshot from an animation. Around 2,500 birds are flying according to the nature’s algorithm. At some point, when I stop the animation and send the 3D information to the printer, you can discover that each bird flies in a different shape. I made a table inspired by this, although it was damaged while moving.

What is the difference between an object that recreates Mother Nature and a product that imitates only the shape?

Well, I don’t know (laughs). But the Bone Chair is based on the ‘real’. All the objects and their shapes have their own reasons for what and how they are. The Bone Chair has its own reason to exist regardless of time; I did not make it because it looks pretty. Premise of the work based on the codes of Mother Nature justifies that it should be in ‘that design’.

How did you come up with this idea?

Can I show you a graph? It includes the prediction of an economist Schumpeter, and you can see that the most novel and innovative objects have been created when the economy was in recession. This suggests a lot about the future. We currently live in an economic crisis. However, it is simultaneously an interesting era where digital and life science are developing dramatically. This circumstance gives me a ‘great inspiration’ on why some objects must be made.

What gives you a ‘little inspiration’?

I like the indeterminacy of design. This is why I studied at the Design Academy Eindhoven. All the professors there come from Droog design. I learned the ways to develop my thoughts on conceptual and fundamental design.

Does this mean that your Heatwave Radiator is a realization of the fundamental design that you pursue?

It’s created upon the principle ‘form follows function’. The Rococo style was originally used mostly for female accessories. I like designs with layers of contents, almost like a poem, and
I like the split between an outer appearance and its hidden ideas. In the case of this radiator, it looks like a sculpture on a wall at first, but in fact, it has an essential function as it expands the surface and touches the air with Rococo curves. This work is rooted in the lengthy debate on ornamentation versus function.

It feels like I am talking to a rather scholarly scientist.

For all I know, I think I am in between. I think that an ‘object’ should always have a meaning or a purpose. If not, it is just a superficial ‘object’, although design itself falls into the superficial category.

Are all your designs based on scientific interests?

Not all of them. People cannot always do only what is necessary. For example, you do things for enjoyment too, don’t you? (Showing a photo) This is a project called Climbing Wall; it is installed in a residential area. I made an indoor wall-climbing device onto the exterior of building. I question why we always select the most efficient path when going from A to B. Why don’t I make a more interesting path? Through this project I wanted to express that enjoyment is sometimes more important than being efficient. The current resident moved in after signing that he will never sue me even if he falls down when climbing the wall (laughs).

That’s impressive. How is your work evolving now?

The answer would be a platform called MakeMe. It’s a combination of local production and digital fabrication, and I think that this could provide an alternative for the methods of industrial production. MakeMe provides downloadable designs. If one uploads a design on the Internet, it could be produced anywhere in the world in appropriate local price. I assure you.

Has your design philosophy changed along the course of your life?

I do two things at large. I make innovative furniture like those shown in this exhibition or industrial work with Flos and Vitra, and these, I do for myself. On the other hand, the design platform MakeMe is for everyone. Anyone can design fashion, architecture, or even food. Buyers can customize their products. Then, the designer’s work would be more likely to create the programs than to design. Let’s suppose that you created something by downloading some design. Then you can pay the designer to realize that design. Designers can then become more powerful than big corporations.

Are you from countryside by any chance?

I am a farmer’s son. In fact, this was quite significant as I always spent my time seeing and imagining in nature.

So I want like to ask, what was your childhood like?

I had many ideas about what I could make in reality, but you never know how long it will take. Therefore, it came across to me that I should write a book about these ideas, and I am still writing them down.

What is a good design for those designers like you who are sensitive to the
development of technologies and materials?

Good designs are formed when new social, economic, or technological systems are conceived during a particular period, and good design should also include many contents with multiple layers. For example, the products invented during the 1920s when the early modernists were active are results of the whole system, not just good products. It’s like a representation of that era.

Can you give an example?

Have you heard of the *Knotted Chair*? This chair was made in the 1990s, and it was designed by using Dutch traditional knotting method. A material called Kevlar is a combination of resin and epoxy, and this material is as strong and light as carbon fiber that is used in making the airplanes. The interesting thing here is that this high-tech material is combined with traditional handcraft. Developing of material and technology means that windows could be made into completely different shapes, not rectangles, even while spending the same amount of money and effort. I like to create elegant and novel products out of these cheap and easy-to-obtain materials.

But your works are currently very expensive. Do you think that ordinary people will get a chance to experience this revolutionary design?

What I really want to do is to make these designs more affordable. I am discussing the possibilities with companies like Flos and Vitra. Furthermore, through *MakeMe*, I would like for one of my designs that you like so much to be made available.

Ultimately what do you want to make?

It’s a dream of mine to write a book and script about my ideas. Someday I would like to build a house using every tool that we have. (Showing a photo) This machine is a robot that builds on blocks of concrete as in a similar method as printing. Maybe it will be possible to build a house using this method one day. So if a person living in the house is bored with it, then he could deconstruct it and then rebuild it into a new shape, or if he wants to expand on it, he can do so. The most stupid thing about a building is that it is always fixed.

Joris Laarman showed me a photo of a robot saying that this work was the most brilliant among all the thesis projects from the Design Academy Eindhoven in recent five years. The robot’s job is to print chairs using recycled plastic, which then can be recycled and remodeled again after putting it through a grinder. He added, “this is a video posted by someone in Nairobi. There are about a hundred laborers working. In this region, there is a surplus of plastic thrown away as trash from around the world. The people here collect this material and create construction supplies using this machinery. I want these people to be able to use the robot that I just showed you by creating the platform like *MakeMe*.” I was curious about why he did not choose to become a scientist when he spent much of his childhood creating things like roller skates and parachutes. However, after listening to his stories, I was able to understand why. The new designs that Laarman is constantly experimenting and creating will be able to change the world. The *Bone Chair* included in his exhibition is a starting point and it provides a strong evidence for this change. Even if he were to make a personal airship by attaching a balloon to a single seat chair, I would applaud him all the way across the Pacific Ocean.