

INTERIOR DESIGN

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high fashion

a passion for pleats

If you wear Issey Miyake's clothes, consider sitting in Nendo's chairs, installed at Friedman Benda in New York

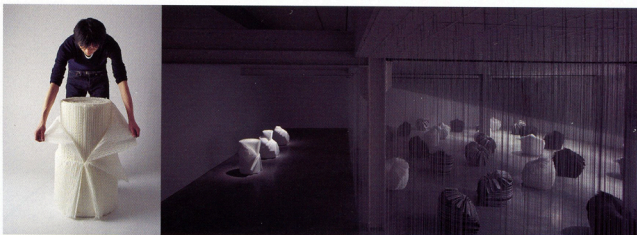
To make his elaborately pleated jackets and dresses, Issey Miyake sandwiches polyester between layers of washi tissue paper, made from tree bark, and feeds the result into a high-temperature pleating machine. Massive amounts of pleated paper are left over as a result—a by-product with no known use until the day that industrial designer Oki Sato paid a visit to Miyake at his factory.

Spying the rolled wastepaper, Sato suggested that his firm, Nendo, could reuse the rolls in prototypes for an exhibition Miyake was curating.

When Marc Benda of the New York gallery Friedman Benda saw the pleated Cabbage chair at a Japanese design expo, the gallery commissioned Nendo to send 40 in black and white for an atmospheric 4,000-square-foot installation. "Wouldn't it be amazing to walk into the gallery and see them all, like cabbages in a field?" director Jennifer Olshin suggested. Proposing the name "Nendo: Ghost Stories," Sato also offered the idea of having thousands of spectral strings rain down from the 11-foot ceiling. The top portion of each string is black, but not just any portion. A two-dimensional digital model dictated how much ink should be applied with felt-tip markers. Nendo staff then threaded a short length of each partially colored string through a hole punched in a strip of cloth, ready to be applied to the ceiling with double-stick tape. When everything emerged from cardboard boxes at Friedman Benda, it took five days for a team of four to install the carefully labeled strips in a grid.

For a closer look at the Cabbages, adventurous viewers pushed through the string by the blue-gelled moonlight glow of halogen floodlights. Several visitors perched, but Olshin didn't notice anyone lounging for long on the chairs—which, as she was careful to point out to any potential

buyer, were individually priced limited editions. If they eventually went into mass production like the seating and tables that Nendo has designed for Cappellini and De Padova, the Cabbage chairs would be shipped tightly rolled. On arrival, the layers would be peeled back to form the pom-pom shape. —Craig Kellogg ➤



Top, clockwise from top left: Ink was applied to the string, using felt-tip markers. The 10¼-foot-long colored strings were threaded through holes punched in polyester strips. Applying double-sided tape would allow the strips to stick to a grid on the gallery ceiling. The strings were ready to ship from Tokyo to New York. **Bottom, from left:** Layers were peeled back to create the finished chair. Where the string hung above chairs in the gallery, Nendo used scissors to cut out a small string-free chamber.



Unlike the prototype, the Cabbage chairs in "Nendo: Ghost Stories" were made with new nonwoven polyester. The 6,800 strings were also polyester.

