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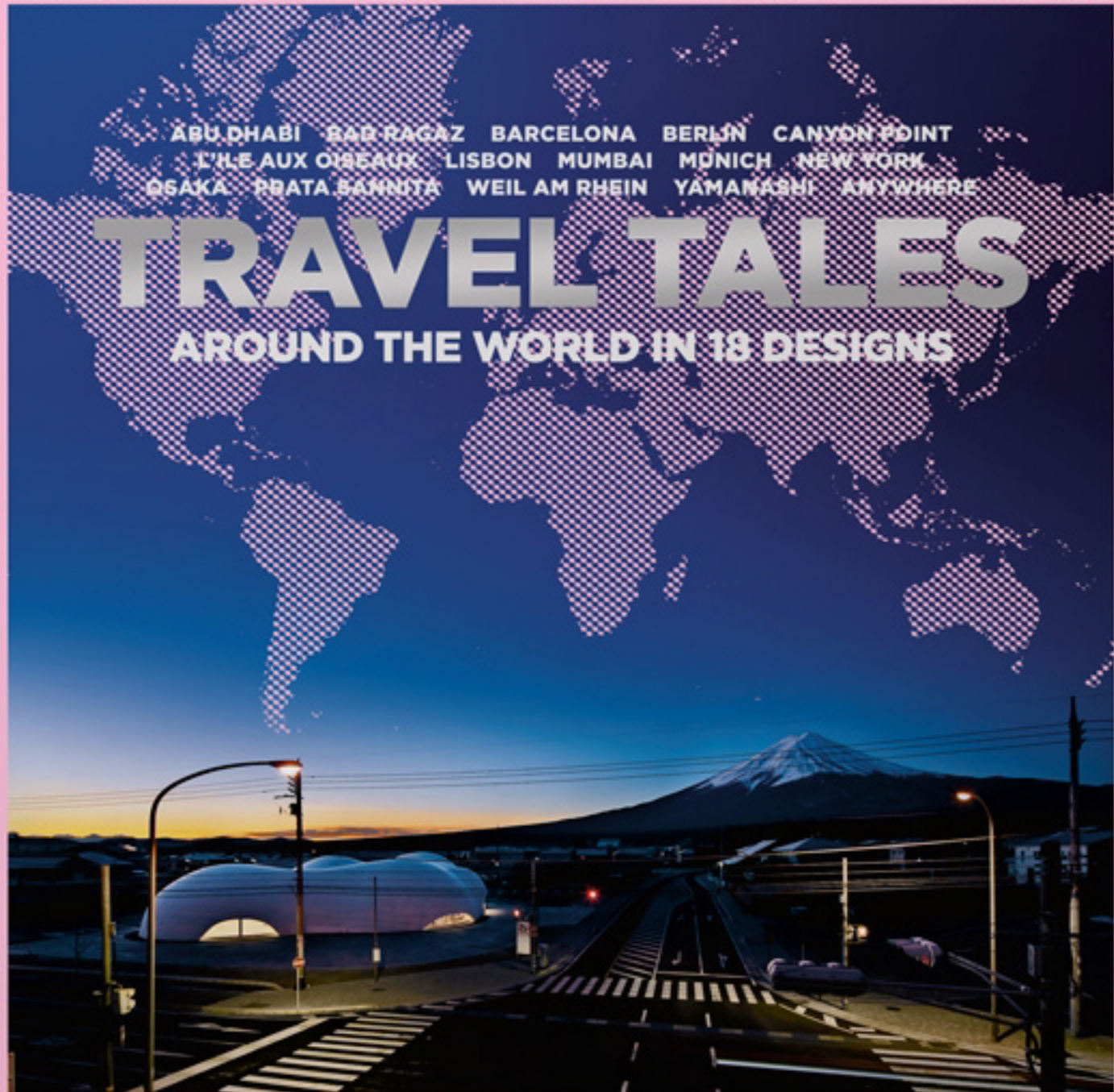


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TRAVEL TALES

AROUND THE WORLD IN 18 DESIGNS



CLEFT OAK & STEEL SIDE CABINET, 40 X 37 X 100 CM (W X D X H)
AND CLEFT OAK STOOL, 60 X 34 X 40 CM (W X D X H).



NEW ANTIQUES

Combine crafts with British influences and you'll end up with work by SIMON HASAN.

WORDS GIOVANNA DUNMALL
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SIMON HASAN

Your work has been very craft-orientated. What do you find so fascinating about traditional crafts? Are you concerned about their extinction?

I'm interested in the texture, richness and heritage that crafts can bring to contemporary objects, and in how crafts can help us forge links between who we are and what we have. I'm more concerned about the death of manufacturing in this country than about the loss of crafts.

Can you tell me a bit more about techniques such as wood cleaving and making cuir bouilli (boiled leather) – especially with respect to your work?

I read about the technique of boiling leather to make armour and drinking vessels in the 15th century. I was fascinated

by the brutal process of taking a soft material and hardening it without resin. Cleft wood is a material often found in rural gates and fences, but I was keen to use it for the structures and frameworks of domestic furniture.

What really gets your creative juices flowing?
I've realized that creativity is such a small part of a designer's job. Creativity plants the initial seed of an idea, but after that it's all about perseverance, problem solving and a struggle to find the most appropriate articulation of the initial thought.

There is a real sense of place in your work. Is having a British identity important to you as a designer?

I guess my work does contain a set of attitudes that might be thought of as

British, but I think of them more as the things I lean toward naturally – and this is what comes out in the work. In an increasingly homogeneous world, it's really important that regional accents appear in the language of design, as well as a sense of provenance.

Do you have a manifesto?

We need a new production model – a sort of boutique (manu)factory system – in which crafts and industry can work together to arrive at richer outcomes. The designer is best placed to make this happen.

The manufacturing process is visible in much of your work, such as in the oak and steel cabinet.

Why?

Wood cleaving and TIG welding don't normally show up in the same sentence, but



STONWARE & CAST METAL VASES. SLIP-CAST STONWARE, CAST IRON/BRASS/BRONZE, LEATHER.

WHO Simon Hasan

WHERE London

GOALS Being happy. Having a dog. Having weekends off and regular holidays.

PROBLEMS Being stressed. Not having a dog. Working seven days a week.

LATEST PROJECT I'm just nearing the completion of a set of boiled-leather furniture for Johnson Trading Gallery. These are the biggest pieces I've ever done. Using a 15th-century armour-making technique is much harder at this scale.

INTERESTS At the moment, I'm interested in heavy industry and rural crafts.

CURRENT FOCUS The notion of being a catalyst through which conversations between crafts and industry can begin.



BRITISH DESIGNER SIMON HASAN (1973).

'I'm interested in the texture, richness and heritage that crafts can bring to contemporary objects'

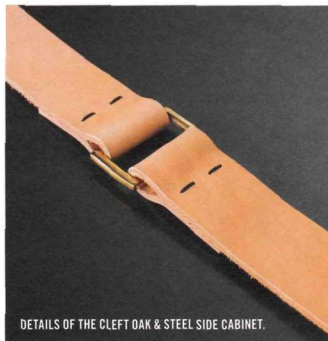
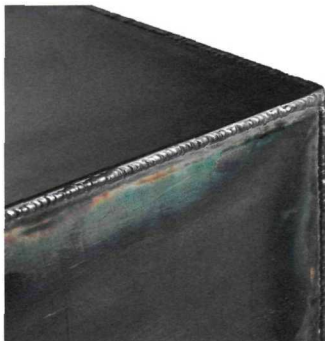
SIMON HASAN

I wanted to combine the rawness of both. I looked at welding as simply another craft and left visible the evidence of the welder's skill.

What do you want to design in the future? Who do you want to work with?

With the boiled leather, I'm interested in developing a body of work that evolves from one project to the next. It's about following a line of enquiry and sharing the trials and tribulations of that process, and this clearly needs to be nurtured in a gallery context. I've just started working with Johnson Trading Gallery in New York. I'd love to work with Nilufar in Milan.

simonhasan.com



DETAILS OF THE CLEFT OAK & STEEL SIDE CABINET.