



“ I try to really understand my audience... but also give them something which is personal to me, my culture and who I am. ”

WONDER BOY

DESIREE KOH roams the world of the avant-garde with award-winning designer Marcel Wanders.



Marcel Wanders once wanted to be a poet, but decided that design was how he could better connect with people

worldwide and touch lives across cultures.

Since opening his Amsterdam studio in 1995 and co-founding the award-winning design label Moooi in 2001, Wanders has produced wallpaper, furniture that also function as art, tableware, beauty products and most recently, a gift range for British retailer Marks & Spencer. He is also a sought after interior designer for hotels and private residences like the Mondrian Hotel in Miami and Casa Son Vida in Mallorca.

Wanders' out-of-this-world furniture collection can be edge home furnishing, in Singapore. Featuring the best of Marcel Wanders, renowned pieces such as Extension Chair, Gothic Chair (above), Heracleum Lamp and Mistral Suspension Light – think chairs that resemble mediaeval thrones and lamps as impalpable as a tree in blossom, in perfect blends of classical extravagance and modern minimalism – and more are on display for those who view homemaking as an art.

“Design speaks an international language and the things we do are made for the people of the world,” says Wanders. “It is really about finding a reason why an

object should be there and what it adds to things that already exist.”

As a child, Wanders loved making things for others, relishing the moment when his recipients unwrapped their presents. In 1996, Wanders rose to international recognition with his legendary Knotted Chair and now sees his work exhibited in important design collectives such as the Museum of Modern Art in both New York and San Francisco, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Rather than relying on inspiration to steer him, Wanders prefers to always be on the move as a post-modern trendsetter. For him, the city that embodies this passion is Tokyo, because “to the Japanese, the material world has a soul”, he says.

“As a designer, this is the story I’m trying to tell every that can do something for people, are alive and have a character of their own, and can influence,” he explains.

Yet, as someone who is always on the go, Wanders does appreciate a sense of place. “If I do a hotel in Miami, you should feel that it is Miami. At the same time, I have to do something that Miami has never seen before,” he says. “This is the difficulty I face, but I think I am starting to be really good at it (managing the challenge) because at the end of the day, hotels are international places and should speak for the location, the world, and me, the designer.” ■