

GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY



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INTERIORS: ALL MY OWN WORK

Karim Rashid is taking a moment. Having turned 50, and beaten cancer, he is suddenly thinking about the rest of his life. “I’ve been looking at people older than me who are still working, and wondering what keeps them driven,” he says. For years, being driven has been Rashid’s thing — you’ll be familiar with many of his product designs, including those sexy curvy bottles for the eco-cleaning company Method and those sexy curvy watches for Alessi. He has created more than 3,000 designs and won more than 300 awards, so you have to wonder why he would bother to continue — what else could he possibly want to achieve when, as he puts it, “I feel like I’ve made an impact on consumers. I’ve changed the status quo and how people use design in their lives”? He’s not being boastful, but simply stating a fact. Wherever he goes, he is swamped by fans who love the way he revamps everyday products to address problems we didn’t know we had — for example, the recent Bobble filter jug, from which you can pour water the moment you’ve filled it.

Improving our lives has been Rashid’s aim from the start. “Fashion is so often backwards-looking,” he says in a soft Canadian twang. “Look at the current trend for 1920s clothes — what does that have to say about how we live now? Designers should be thinking about shoes you can slip off easily as you walk through x-ray machines at airports. Design should shape the future of our lives.” There is nothing outdated about Rashid’s signature style — just look at the bright colours and modern shapes of his new range of furniture for the Danish brand BoConcept, inspired by the trees of Denmark and Ottawa, where he was raised, or the flat he shares with his wife in Chelsea, Manhattan, which is filled with his products. “I surround myself with everything I’ve made — the oven, the flatware, the sofa,” he says. “People think it’s egocentric, but if you designed a tape dispenser, wouldn’t you put it on your desk? It makes me strive to be better, too — as I use my designs, I think about how to improve them.” Doesn’t the colour scheme give him a headache? “Not at all. I find the pink floor uplifting. It enhances my mood.”

What is he going to do next? Rashid swears he’s calming down, “doing everything in my power to stop the cancer coming back, and that means a lot of relaxing”, but he’s still working across 42 countries and flying almost every day. “Yes, but if the plane was late in the past, I used to get really agitated,” he says. “Now I’ve learnt to accept what I can’t change — I sit there quietly sketching on my iPad.” That’s about as close to time out as he’s ever going to get.

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