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Tasteful Design

In these days of landfill shame and over-consumption, designers are on the hunt for new, environmentally sustainable materials to answer the world's design needs. The answer, it seems, lies in food and the possibilities of edible design pieces.

Japanese designer Nosigner exhibited his light unit 'Spring Rain' at last year's 100% Design event at Earl's Court. The piece is made out of bean-starch vermicelli and is edible when boiled. This gives it what Nosigner suggests are perfect environmental credentials: 'Edible products create zero trash.'

'Total Trattoria', Martino Gamper's recent installation at the Aram Gallery, aimed to bring together people in a dining experience supported by design. All elements were custom-designed, including low-hung lamps made from delicately rolled flat bread.

Okay Studio similarly adopted the food-meets-design theme when transforming the setting for the Brit Insurance Designs of the Year award ceremony. The London-based collective created an innovative series of table centrepieces, reinterpreting the iconic Anglepoise lamp in bread.

French designers Sébastien Cordoleani and Franck Fontana have also turned their talents to tasty materials with a series of sweets currently on sale at Barcelona's Papabubble sweet store. The duo has approached sugar in a similar way to glass, moulding, blowing and stamping it into delightful lollipop shapes.

Sugar was also the focus of Oliver Kessler's SugarCubeLight, exhibited at last December's Heim+Handwerk design fair in Munich. The light is a giant sugar cube made from a mixture of sugar and resin, which according to Kessler, 'will last for eternity'.

For Greetje van Helmond, choosing food was a comment on the impermanence of fashion, as opposed the permanence of the materials used. She chose food for exactly the opposite reasons to Kessler: for its fragility. For her final year exhibition at the RCA graduate show 2007, she took basic foodstuffs and transformed them into valuable pieces, including a wall made out of bread and jewellery made from sugar crystals.

'It fits into the debate about sustainability and this quest we have to find new materials to work with,' says van Helmond about her work and the trend towards food as material. 'But for me, it's also about creating something by hand.'

Like other designers, van Helmond is celebrating food as a tactile material. In today's design climate, where so much is done via 3D imaging and rapid prototyping, designers are turning to food because of its crafted, tangible and organic qualities.

WWW.NOSIGNER.COM
WWW.OKAYSTUDIO.ORG
WWW.GAMPERMARTINO.COM
WWW.PAPABUBBLE.COM
WWW.GREETJEVANHELMOND.COM



THIS PAGE FROM LEFT : FLAT BREAD LAMPS BY MARTINO GAMPER FOR TOTAL TRATTORIA AT THE ARAM GALLERY; SPRING RAIN BY NOSIGNER MADE FROM BEAN STARCH VERMICELLI; 'UNSUSTAINABLE' NECKLACE BY GREETJE VAN HELMOND
OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP : SÉBASTIEN CORDOLEANI AND FRANCK FONTANA FOR PAPABUBBLE SWEET STORE ; BREAD ANGLEPOISE LAMP BY TOMÁS ALONSO, PART OF OKAY STUDIO

