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A Journal from  
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# Estad

**Strength  
in Numbers**



**Estd**

**Editorial Director/ Laura Houseley  
Art Direction/ MadeThought**

**Contributing Photographers/  
Matthew Donaldson  
Peter Guenzel  
Marius W. Hansen**

**Contributing Writers/  
Clare Dowdy  
Jonathan Bell  
Sam Hecht**

**Online Construction/ Deconstruct  
Cover/ Matthew Donaldson**

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**Issue 03**

As our cover states, strength can often be found in numbers. Nobody is as appreciative of that as the ever-expanding team at Established & Sons. The family of design talent that launched the company only two years ago has seen some significant additions. Sam Hecht of acclaimed design company Industrial Facility is one well-appreciated new addition to the to the line-up. See a report on Industrial Facility (page 38) and their important contribution to contemporary design. Sam Hecht is a great design theorist too so we decided to employ his talents this issue as the writer of our think piece 'Under a Fiver' (page 28).

Hecht's intrinsic curiosity for everyday objects and their subtle values is a timely subject. It's a much discussed design point of view that is shared by another Established & Sons talent, Jasper Morrison. In this issue Morrison answers our questions about his controversial product 'The Crate' in words, and more importantly, through the design of the new 'Crate Series'. You can see the first shots of these utilitarian designs here (page 22).

Strength in numbers is something that Edward Carpenter and André Klauer are well placed to promote too. These talented young designers have come together for the first time in the design of 'Easy' and they tell us why two brains can (sometimes) be better than one (page 32). Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby of BarberOsgerby are a design duo who seem to have already proven the adage many times over. Clare Dowdy quizzes them on their impressive career trajectory and we preview (page 12) their first sofa system; Panoramic.

So, as the Established & Sons family tree expands we're only too happy to harness that creative talent over the coming pages — we hope you enjoy this new issue of Estd.

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# Some Recent Acquisitions

Words/ Sam Hecht

**Un-Global cultures, honesty of function, local needs and local applications; Sam Hecht has an original way of seeing the mundane and everyday objects that surround us.**

**It's an individual philosophy that reveals an independent way of thinking. Hecht shares his point of view with us.**

On my travels, I've wandered through hundreds of local hardware stores, chemists and supermarkets, finding objects that involve oddity. Others might visit landmarks or museums, but I prefer to stop the taxi by small local shops – its here that you get a real reflection of what local culture is, by what they consume. I buy small odd items with my 5 pound limit and take them back to the studio where they inform our work and start discussions. Each of the objects appeals to me for a specific reason – it has an ability to address and identify a small and localised need that communicates something about where I have been. Where, for instance, other than in Japan, would you need 'sock glue'? (The glue secures schoolgirls' socks and protects against the exposure of calves.)

Its also almost Ten years since the Design Museum in London asked me to exhibit a selection from Under a Fiver, only for it to be criticised by the public as nothing to do with 'Design'. But soon after, and with respected dogma, the Design Museum asked me to show the collection in its entirety. Fast-forward ten years later, and the then director of the museum, Alice Rawthsthorh created an exhibition called 'Under a tenner', for which I thought was too easy. But it did allow me to put in a toaster and kettle, which I bought for under a tenner from Woolworths – here, it wasn't the objects that were odd, but the price.

I first documented my collection in a small, 50-page book entitled Under a Fiver. Several articles followed in design and popular magazines from around the world, including invitations for me to speak about the collection.

**Under a Fiver, for those who missed all of this excitement, is for some people a collection of tat. But for me it represents value beyond the price.**

It's a colourful assembly of objects that serve primary needs in a roundabout way, and it is continuously expanding. People find the collection amusing and captivating.

Each object is a testament to un-global culture. Communities the world over, continue to need things that serve their local needs, where design plays little if no part at all. I guess this is partly why I feel refreshed, because there is so little design as we know it today. As long as this local attitude continues, my collection will grow and grow.

Globalisation is about dissolution of locality. It's about forming a larger-scale economy and identity and risks the loss of a local one. After the late 70s and the world's oil crisis, local manufacturers pressed ahead with producing goods, which had little relationship to their demographic

origin. In Mexico for instance, AT&T opened factories to manufacture telephones, and with the cordless boom of the 80's and 90's, workers from small villages found themselves producing machinery that they had no relationship with. The concept, that an end market did not need to be a local market, was successful, and with most of the Far East investing heavily in this equation, globalisation was to be a 90's phenomenon. This concept has now become turbo-charged in China.

**For many companies, the market for the goods was outside of the producer's domain and culture. And as a designer I often find myself responsible for implementing this equation.**

I'd visit factories in Japan and Korea, and see a 'Wenders'-like scene, where factory workers were producing large fridges and televisions that would never possibly get through their own doorframe; instead, they would be bound for the west. But on these travels I was far more interested in spending the afternoon at the local market, buying what they brushed their teeth with, or discovering what was used to wash vegetables. My means are always modest, and I diligently spent no more than a fiver on an object.

Soon I found myself with a large collection of objects to be able

to categorise them. I grouped them under the simplest of names; tools, hygiene, health, food and drink. And by doing this it brought about new connections and new characters.

**Gradually, I realised that behind each object's quirky existence (some people might compare this to a tourist meeting a local), there was an honesty of local function and local material.**

Things started to become more interesting. When I shared my observations with the local communities, they often reacted with astonishment, because they had previously taken the objects' existence for granted. And that's a perfectly normal response since they are things they understand to be perfectly natural.

And now, on to some of my recent purchases. On a trip to Switzerland, I picked up a fire igniter made of small shards of wood wrapped together with paper. In the middle is a wick made of string. It reminded me of some kind of bomb, and the action of lighting it and throwing it into a fireplace furthered that. In Seattle, I found a most elegant spray dispenser, where the trigger is inside the bottle outline; some disposable dishes made of leaves from Thailand – the oddity being that they are

based on disposable styrene forms; also from Thailand, a gas-lighter where the button was as big as the lighter itself; and from Los Angeles, a three fingered glove for handling toxic chemicals. Lots to think about.



## The Simple Life

**Sam Hecht of Industrial Facility produces quiet designs from intrinsic, simple forms. But getting to the elementary can often be a complicated process.**

Simplicity is complicated. It is also unfashionable, for complexity defines the modern age. Industrial Facility are designers and explorers, seeking out what they call the 'junction between product and space.' Founded by Sam Hecht and Kim Colin in 2002, Industrial Facility operates from an austere studio in Clerkenwell, where they assemble rough prototypes, collect and research and shape their aesthetic. Together with Senior Designer Ipei Matsumoto, Hecht and Colin's work is characterised by simplicity, pared-down, clean lines, regardless of whether the object in question is high technology or a single piece of metal.

'The work itself is very, very varied - an odd combination of projects. It keeps it continually challenging,' says Hecht, formerly Head of Design at IDEO Europe and responsible, along with Naoto Fukasawa, for setting up IDEO's Tokyo office. Joining forces with Colin, an architect and educator, to form IF - a name chosen to be deliberately banal - the studio has a broad approach, working in the

fields of telecommunications, fashion, transportation and consumer products. Hecht is adamant that Industrial Facility are 'not consultants - we're very much designers', but their approach is dense and multi-layered, often going far beyond the original brief. 'With our work we question pretty much everything,' says Hecht, 'That produces a very difficult working process.'

The approach is epitomised in their Picturemate Printer for Epson (2006). Intended as a totally free-standing object, the printer can work off batteries and receive images from a mobile phone via Bluetooth. 'It was a technically demanding project,' says Hecht, explaining how they considered how the role of the printer could be expanded, given away for free and designed to make money only through ink cartridges and paper. 'In terms of design,' Hecht says, 'the printer is totally devalued.' The Picturemate aims to change all that. 'When you're not using it you don't want it to shout out 'printer' - it can be placed on a shelf, stored, whatever,' he says, 'It was a big leap for Epson and changed their perception of what design can do.'

Ongoing work for Taylor's Eye Witness, a knifemaker with 150 years of manufacturing experience, has given the studio the opportunity to re-assess several archetypal forms. Their most recent product for the firm is a set of ultra low-cost cutlery. Describing their ongoing collaboration as about 'trying to bring back

## 2001/02

**Plywood Furniture Program (Bed and Sofa's) for Muji, 2001  
Second Telephone for Muji, 2002  
Flexlamp for Droog, 2002**



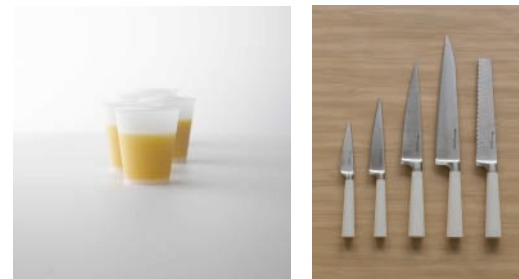
## 2003

**Low Sofa for Muji, 2003  
Equipment for Whirlpool, 2003**



## 2004

**Paper Cup for Takeo, 2004  
IF4000 for Taylors Eye Witness, 2004**



## 2005

Mouse, Lexon, 2005



## 2006

Picturemate Printer for Epson, 2006  
Coffee Maker for Muji, 2006



## 2007

Cutlery, Taylors Eye Witness, 2007  
Jersey Dish for Whirlpool, 2007



character to the company and its products,' Hecht explains 'The starting point was disposable cutlery – the stuff that people apparently don't think about.' In a similar vein, their knife rack for the company is a simple block of wood, embedded with earth magnets and invisibly mounted on the wall 'It has a certain kind of oddity to it,' says Hecht.

Hecht and Colin's work embraces 'reverse complexity', distilling the purest form from research data; in order to achieve the apparently effortless and obvious there is an enormous amount of work. This starts with reappraising the brief. 'We set out the client's expectations first,' explains Colin, 'we basically re-write the brief and remind them of the things that are really important.' Like the Epson printer, their coffee maker for Muji (2006) was considered both for its functional and non-functional requirements. 'Part of its use is its landscape – when it's not being used it's just sitting there,' says Hecht, 'so we wanted to make something that was totally cylindrical.' Colin adds that 'the landscape of the kitchen acknowledges that the coffee maker can go in various places. And the pot can migrate – it's something you're happy to use at the table.'

Another ongoing theme is the things that aren't generally thought about, researching the options for clients and manufacturers who haven't considered all the implications of a product. Perhaps their most successful client is Muji, with whom Industrial Facility

has a long-standing relationship. Muji understands the value of 'hidden' design. Their plywood bed for the company (2001) was designed to be simple, not only to look at but to assemble. 'The things that aren't seen are sometimes the most important things,' says Hecht, 'a theme that runs through a lot of our work.' The following year they designed a sofa for the company, with a complex hinge system to facilitate assembly of the flat-packed item. Even though this hinge would only be used once, the benefit it brought was deemed important enough to include it.

A personal side-project that epitomises Industrial Facility's approach is 'Under a Fiver', described by Hecht 'a collection of objects we've found in our travels, all of which have an oddity about them – an economic, functional or aesthetic oddity.' 'They continue to have a big influence on our work – in a subversive way.' The casual, unconscious anti-design of these everyday objects is a quality that Industrial Facility strives to attain with all their work.

The Industrial Facility approach is rare in a world that devalues design and embraces complexity as a symbol of progress. 'Design has been hijacked by added value,' says Hecht. 'It's lost the majority of its real responsibilities,' Colin adds. By taking things back to first principles, Hecht, Colin and Matsumoto are helping to map a humanised product landscape.



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**Back in November/  
A New Space/  
A Fuller House/  
Top Shelf/  
A Tabletop/  
Young at Heart/  
On the Right Track/**

Est\_d\_ is always on the look  
out for new contributors.  
If you have a talent we should  
consider let us know at/  
[estd@establishedandsons.com](mailto:estd@establishedandsons.com)

