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design winner
toko

dutch courage

This year's standout design hot shop blew the competition aside with its European style and consistent ability to produce enchanting work.

Toko Design was established in 2002 by Eva Dijkstra and Michael Lugmayr. Formerly based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, it has been operating out of Sydney since 2007. It's a multi-disciplinary design studio with a conceptual and experimental approach, and an emphasis on print design. However, the studio works across a broad range of fields for both Australian and international clients.

Since landing in Sydney, Toko has worked on projects ranging from magazine design to events, posters, branding, packaging and signage. In 2008 the studio completed assignments for Code Magazine (The Netherlands), 2008 National Architecture Awards, Graphic Design Festival Breda (The Netherlands) Young Gun Awards, UTS School of Architecture, Marque Lawyers, and Cook & Phillip Park – a pretty impressive list of credentials, considering the company had to start from scratch.

"Besides getting acquainted with the complex Aussie coffee culture, understanding the Australian taxation system and setting up a business in a foreign country (which includes finding new contacts, producers, friends and of course clients), Toko has managed to establish itself as a little 'powerhouse' . . . while re-establishing its position in the overseas market," explains Lugmayr.

Toko's first official Australian commission was the City of Sydney (CoS), which asked Toko to design signage and environmental graphics for the new City Rangers headquarters. This was followed up by other CoS projects, such as signage and artwork for the 'One Stop Shop' in Redfern, Sydney, and a bronze plaque artwork in Victoria Park. In the meantime, Toko attracted more high-profile clients like the Royal

Australian Institute of Architects. Other projects finished in 2008 include the design of a 36-meter window graphic for the UNSW, Virgin Atlantic collateral package, new identity and website for Terroir Architects, graphic design for the Green Void exhibition by LAVA Architects, along with projects for Mini, Jaguar and the New York Times.

Comments from this year's Hotshop judges typified all that was true about the work produced by this nimble but incredibly driven design set up.

"You get the sense that Toko is taking chances, even though there was a consistency to its work, each piece remained surprising," said one judge. Another described the shop as taking design beyond convention with its Dutch credibility. One judge went on to say: "inspired and consistent work – a standout winner with work that made my heart flutter".

In short, Toko has generated a project list, which comprises of a diverse scope of clients, large and small, in equally broad fields of operation.



01 Toko's work on Platform Exhibition.

02 2008 National Architecture Awards poster.