

The Pandemic Project Championing Sustainability within the Fashion Industry

Collaboration with Meaning. 02 Resilience

Melbourne, Australia 2nd of December, 2020 h-ours is fashion multi-hyphenate Rong Jake Chen's community orientated creative hub focused within the fashion industry and his latest iteration named '02 resilience' is a pandemic inspired inquiry exploring the future of sustainability within the fashion industry. Joining Rong to undertake this study of the impact of COVID-19 on the fashion industry is storyteller Vy Nguyen, alongside designers Cashmere Malekitsch, Cynthia & Xiao, FFIXXED Studios, Graedance, Jonathan Liang, Karla Laidlaw, Speed Ltd., and Shhorn.

The culmination of this exploration is an exhibition opening on the 10th of December presenting, above all, the resilience of the designers, the supply chain and the community.

The COVID19 pandemic has left the fashion industry with cut orders and supply chain mayhem resulting in dead stock, over supply of materials, and an overall drop in demand for products. For some people in the supply chain, this means a loss of work and livelihood. h-ours has sought to address some of these concerns by offering guidance and support for designers to adapt to uncertainty by exploring and developing new categories to take advantage of the would-be-waste within their supply chain.

In this collaboration, the participating designers have all produced both an exhibition object and commercial product that extend beyond designing for the body to consider designing for homes as well. The designers have utilised leftover resources and materials from different entities to create a limited quantity of special edition items that are individually brand-centric, laden with cultural meaning and each exploring individual designer's shared experiences through the pandemic via a theme. For example, designer couple, ffixxed studios, rekindled their relationship with intimacy and created new levels of 'togetherness' – interpreted through their exhibition blanket fitted with their signature knitted caps and four arm holes, to be experienced as a form of elevated closeness. Alongside this, they've created a limited number of pillow cases to share within this theme, made completely out of 100% wool deadstock.

Each item reflects each designer's meditations on how Covid-19 shaped their brands and personal life in 2020, as well as their statement for how this pandemic will inform their future practice. Themes explored were also developed as a way to connect with the viewing community, allowing for conversations on wider shared experiences with the pandemic, whilst also providing a learning platform about these designers and the complexities of the fashion supply chain.

shhorn on sleep

ffixxed studios on togetherness Jonathan Liang on lazing

Cynthia & Xiao on renewed comfort

Cashmere Malekitsch on body dysmorphia

Speed on memories

Graedance (by Rong Jake) on unseen time

emerging feature: Karla Laidlaw on hope

Photographers Myles Pedlar, Phebe Schmidt and Tre Koch have also collaborated to document the designer's offerings for the home, interpreting a selection of objects through their signature lens.

The exhibition for h-ours will open on the 10th of December with a limited opening event and will run for three days from the 11th to the 13th December at Le Space in Collingwood, a newly emerged spaced at the intersection of design, art, and education, run by internationally acclaimed photographer, Ying Ang.

As part of the digital voyage this year has taken, an online platform has been made in conjunction with the physical exhibition, and features more details on the designers, their works, and allows for the purchasing of the limited edition lifestyle product made for the exhibition. This can all be accessed at www.h-ours.com.au.

Event Start Date: 11.12.20

Event End Date 13.12.20

Location: Le Space Collingwood, 1 Mater Street.

Contact: Rong Jake Chen (0401 946 360), rong@h-ours.com.au Due to current Victorian restrictions, participants need to register for attendance, with event caps.

Free event registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/130516493345>

Hi-resolution images of product photography: Dropbox <https://bit.ly/33uK28B> / Googledrive <https://bit.ly/3obBwDq>

Sponsored by:

Creative Victoria

Le Space

About Rong Jake Chen:

Rong Jake Chen (Yuan Rong Chen) is a Chinese designer based in Australia. Hailing from a migrant family, Rong draws inspiration from his cultural identity to design from a liminal place merging themes from his birth place in the east to Australia where he currently resides. Rong has a background of design through practice. From designing t-shirts for his friends, Rong's design eventually caught the eye of UNIQLO with who he collaborated on a capsule. His work focuses on researching humanistic narratives, such as communities and primal natures, whilst looking into the cyclical nature of our social blueprint.

An admirer of contemporary art as a practice, and digital media as a medium, much of Rong's work integrates and welcomes collaboration in the process. Formerly the co-creative at AMXANDER, a contemporary menswear line that reinvented and explored cultural and social uniforms, he has been nominated twice for the International Woolmark Prize, the National Designer Award and also the Lane Crawford Creative Callout. Since leaving AMXANDER, Rong has increasingly pursued new ways to explore fashion and art projects. He currently has an online residency at Burea of Works, exhibiting alongside contemporary Chinese artists including Xiao Ke and Zi Han on their global series exploring the 'What is Chinese?'

About h-ours:

As the community project arm of Rong Jake, h-ours takes various forms and platforms for its execution but maintains a strong ethos in developing and growing emerging and contemporary talent in Australia. Project 01 took form as a pop up store in St Collins Lane, featuring an array of diverse global and local talent.

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