



Quilt chair

Solace chair

PERFECT POISE

KERUSI STRIKES A FINE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCAL FLAVOUR AND INTERNATIONAL SOPHISTICATION

As furniture goes, despite a booming manufacturing sector, the Malaysian furniture industry is always perceived as being keener to copy rather than innovate. Frustrated with the status quo, interior designer Karen Mok decided to blaze her own trail by launching her own brand of beautifully crafted furniture named Kerusi or chair in Malay.

"As a professional scouting for furniture for clients or myself, I always find it difficult locating furniture that is both of outstanding quality and truly Malaysia, designed and produced locally. Whatever is available is pretty standard and monotonous as it's mainly mass-produced. That's where Kerusi comes in to fill the gap as we create pieces with greater individuality and character," she enthuses.



Fettle dining chair



Vivid single seater sofa



Fossil round table



Duvel chair



Hew dining table

After a decade in the interior design industry, working her way up from draughtsman to creative director, the Malaysian Institute of Art graduate is well equipped to take on this new challenge. She finally took the plunge in early 2011, after many years of talking and dreaming about striking out on her own.

The first Kerusi collection is called Fuse, and Karen made it in her favourite wood: "Teak is beautiful yet sombre, delicate yet solid and durable. It is an exotic hardwood with a high rubber and oil content, giving it extreme longevity. Kerusi harvests the aged teak from a sustainable timber plantation in Java."

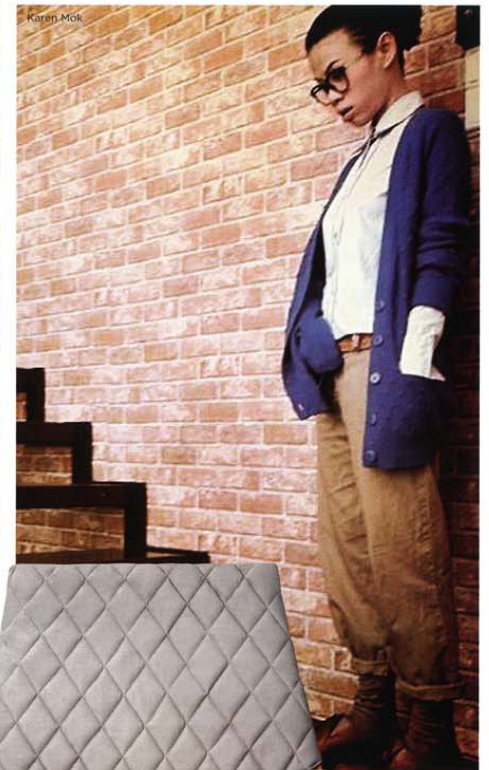
Fuse features an assortment of styles under three broad categories. The contemporary styled Vivid range with oversized proportions, for instance, is made of the highest quality teak wood that is defined by a strong regular grain. As for the baroque inspired Hew dining table and Fettle chair, Karen made the decorative feet and turned legs more slender and sleeker than the classical ones. In another blending of the old and new, Karen revisited traditional quilting for the Quilt and Duvel chairs that flaunt sculptural frames and zingy red or dove gray upholstery for modern aplomb.

Despite Kerusi's fledgling status, Karen managed to rope in Hong Kong-born artist Frank Woo for a series of sensual, sculptural furniture pieces. Made of recycled wood but set in acrylic, the irresistibly colourful and tactile chaise longue and armchair are a foil to the muted mainstream ones.

At the moment, Karen's creations are only available at Lightcraft but there has been interest from buyers from Bangkok and Mumbai. She is currently hard at work on her next collection that uses recycled log and raw materials. **R**

www.kerusi.co

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Karen Mok