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## Exhibition of bright, primitive and chunky designs (Updated 01:14 A.M.)

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 By Jane Rickards; The China Post

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A barbaric necklace, made of red resin and modeled on coral, is displayed next to green and blue translucent salad spoons formed as if a child clumsily squeezed them into shape using plasticine.

Bright, primitive and chunky -- they're not the usual adjectives applied to jewelry and homeware. But these qualities have helped Australian company Dinosaur Designs transform itself from a student operation at a Sydney market to an international brand and, now, into an exhibitor at the National Museum of History.

Visitors to the museum can see the company's jewelry which designer Caroline Herrera has used as accessories in a fashion parade in 2003's New York Fashion Week -- as well as homeware that inspired Louis Vuitton to commission a chess set and Taiwan's own BenQ to commission designs for digital cameras and computers.

The company's designers -- Louise Olsen, Stephen Ormandy and Liane Rossler -- experimented with clear polyester resin almost 20 years ago, a material that previously was used for industrial designs such as surfboard manufacture.

Resin became their signature medium, giving their designs a handmade feel, even capturing actual fingerprints.

Designer Stephen Ormandy said although the company had not consciously tried to design objects representing Australian culture, people often told him the designs had an Australian feel all the same.

He said this was because he came from a relatively young country.

"It's possibly the freedom in what we do," he said. "Anything goes. There are no barriers, there is no cultural history to pay attention to or to (put) weights on your shoulders," he said.

"(Whereas) I could imagine trying to be a young Taiwanese calligrapher would be a very daunting thing to take on, given the great masters of China and Taiwan," he said.

He also said his company's preference for bright colors was influenced by Australian culture.

"The atmosphere is so bright, the sun is stronger in Australia, the light is brighter and so colors are more intense and I guess we have an affinity for more intensity," he said.

And the company's use of big chunky beads and organic forms was linked to the designers' love of nature, he said, with some designs modeled on real coral, sea shells or river stones

The exhibition was organized by the museum, Australia's Asialink, Object and the Australian mission here, the Australian Commerce and Industry Office.

The government here is hoping the exhibition will help boost Taiwan's own efforts to create unique products that fuse original art with commerce.

At the exhibition's opening yesterday, Taiwan mannequins modeled the company's jewelry wearing clothes made by Australian designers, such as Lisa Ho, to the tune of a song from Australian singer Kylie Minogue.


"We hope in future there will be even more exhibitions in Taiwan so the two countries can have even closer exchanges, said Council for Cultural Affairs Vice Minister Hong Ching-feng.

The exhibition "Dinosaur Designs" runs at the National Museum of History until May 1.

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