

HEAD SPACE

WORDS BY GILLA MADDEN

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R-Co
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Melissa Jackson
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Carr
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Emery Studio

The second annual Design Institute of Australia (DIA) 'Design in Sport' luncheon, 'Design in the Fast Lane', was held recently to correspond with the 2007 Formula 1 ING Australian Grand Prix. Aside from presentations by Tim Bamford, CEO of the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, Dan Flynn of Flynn Silver (designer of the Formula 1 trophy) and Nicolas Hogios of Toyota Australia, the luncheon also showcased 13 helmets by a diverse group of leading designers.

The brief, 'Don't hold back', corresponded with the Grand Prix theme. According to Victorian DIA interior designer, Karen Baynes, "The aim was to take the designers out of their comfort zone and to explore the diversity of design between them." The 13 teams were: Buro North, Carr, Charlwood, Cobalt Niche, Cornwell, Emery Studio, Geyer, Melissa Jackson Fashion, OS Initiative, Qube Konstrukt, R-Co, Syndicate Design and Watts Design, and each interpreted the brief extremely differently.

R-Co's Richard Henderson explains his company's contribution. "The strategic thinking behind our design involved an analysis of three core elements: the driver, the track and the emotional context of piloting a precision engineered F1 racing car at speeds in excess of 300 kilometres per hour," he says. "As the source of all thought, action and decision, the brain signifies a starting point and finishing line in one. From the power and speed of its transactions, races can be won or lost and creative solutions found and executed. We applied this key message to our creative processes and chose to employ hot, modern colours to juxtapose the starkness of the helmet's white finish." In contrast, the milliner Melissa Jackson has relished the opportunity to showcase her cutting edge approach to design. With training in both fashion and textile design, Jackson says the proposal has been particularly fun as she's been able to employ her textile design skills. "I have really enjoyed drawing on my textile design background and approaching this project as both a milliner and textile artist," she says. "A hard surface was a challenge, particularly as I'm used to manipulating and sculpting the form from pliable mediums." Using the phrase 'take flight' for inspiration, Jackson has hand-drawn a bird, which has been transferred on to a helmet by Krals Creations, known for its personal customisation of helmets so popular with the 'Harley' crowd.

In devising the concept, Jackson says she created a character, Lola Lorraine, based on a friend's mother. "I was inspired by my friend's mum who raced cars in her youth," she explains. "I imagined a girl who likes to race cars, who likes to drive fast and who likes to challenge the stereotypical 'grid girl' role of a woman in motor sport."

Following the luncheon the helmets went on display at the GP Expo pavilion. Karen Baynes, who is also the founder and organiser of the Design in Sport series, says, "Our aim was to showcase the outstanding talent of Australian designers to visitors from around the world and to foster an interest in design amongst the many young people and students in attendance."

For more information contact Karen Baynes at kbaynes@bigpond.net.au or visit www.dia.org.au.