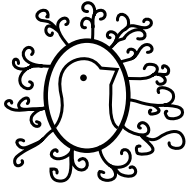


core77® design network  
press release



**Canary in a Coalmine -- The 2003 Coroflot Members Show**

Formidable works signal important changes in the design world

*Press Release*

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(NEW YORK) **The 2003 Coroflot Members Show** is an exhibition featuring emergent ideas in furniture, objects, prints and interactive design produced by members of **Coroflot.com**, one of the world's premiere on-line communities for creative professionals. Representing a pool of more than 13,000 individuals and design firms, **Core77** presents the 2003 inaugural presentation of the collection, titled "**Canary in a Coalmine**," at Gallery 91 in the SoHo district of Manhattan. The exhibition opens May 17, and runs through May 20, 2003.

Coinciding with the 2003 International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF), the exhibition is a dynamic sampling of the most innovative and thought-provoking work from a thriving, global community of young designers.

Curated by Eric Ludlum, a founding partner of Core77, the exhibition seeks to highlight the non-traditional and radical. The show's title, "**Canary in a Coalmine**," refers to the idea that its selected projects are early indicators of emerging trends in the design world.

These pieces represent the periphery of design rather than the mainstream. The work challenges design as it pulls away from its primary place as an instrument of industry and moves toward concept, craft and art. According to Mr. Ludlum, "Mirroring the larger role of the designer vanguard in our increasingly commercial culture, these designers portend a shift in the role of designer. In the metaphorical space of our show, they are the canaries in the coalmine."

Rather than slick production pieces, each object stands on its own as an editorial commentary, a manifestation of a concept, or an expression of individual artistic integrity. The work represents an ongoing shift of interest from commercial activities to personal expression within the creative community. Some focus on the minutiae of design, concentrating on the solid specifics of making a mechanical object work, or just building something big. (Witness Chad Vermeulen's 73" scale model aircraft carrier, made from over 8,000 pieces of Lego.) Others choose to create the fanciful—items without use. Some look back at the environment they fled and mock it with intentionally frivolous work. Some of the specific paths taken by the canaries include:

*Removal from Process*

Many of the objects signal a self-removal of designer from design; not only from the field of design, but the act of design. Todd Falkowsky, as designer, treads lightly with the *Toy Chair*, constructed of a matrix of steel rings through which pre-produced toys are suspended, leaving little evidence of his passing contact with the piece.

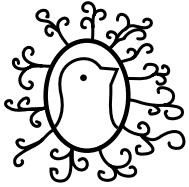
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*Canary in a Coalmine, Press Release (cont'd 2/2)*

### *Professional Introspection*

There is a suspicion of the design proposition itself, and designers ask if the questions design answers are worthwhile in the first place. Fremdkoerper, designers of *Europallet*, a standard palette actualized in precious wood, offers "solutions for no problem" as they say, while Benjamin Bearsch, with his *Spirit Frame*, a simple picture frame with a leveling mechanism embedded in it, provides satisfaction for the most basic and compulsive needs.

### *Commentary*

There are pieces that aspire to address cultural or moral issues directly: the proposed 24110 monument to the U.S. nuclear policy by Mike Simonian, and *Smoking Mask* by Michael Sans, whose work has been featured in *Elle Décor*, *Design Report*, *Axis*, the *LA Times*, *Graphis*, and *ID Magazine*, clearly provide critical commentary on important societal matters. Guido Ooms and Davy Grosemans' *Dutch Delight* tell their story more obliquely; this collaboration resulted from their participation in the Dutch Souvenir Project, organized by the European Ceramic Work Center (EKWC). 41 Dutch and foreign designers, and visual artists were invited to develop a new vision of the Dutch souvenir, suggesting alternatives for the widely known pottery and porcelain windmills, clogs, cows and tulips.

### *Response to the Undefined*

There are pieces that offer answers to questions that are unasked, or even unidentified entirely: Mark Meerdink's *Ice Cream Cone Head*—perhaps it is about play or violence or totem making? Regardless of what the piece suggests, what matters is that it exists, is evocative, and asks the observer to look for its origins.

The process of putting the show together was one of extraction: rather than looking through 10,000 portfolios in search of excellence, Coroflot let the theme emerge as the veins of ideas revealed rich deposits of talent. As such, the end product—this show—was not manufactured, but discovered.

**Exclusive press preview on Friday, May 16, 6-9 PM.**

**To access images on line and for more information, please visit:  
[http://www.coroflot.com/members\\_show/press/2003ImageGallery/images.html](http://www.coroflot.com/members_show/press/2003ImageGallery/images.html)**

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### About Coroflot

Coroflot is a career and community site for creative professionals. Coroflot ([www.coroflot.com](http://www.coroflot.com)) hosts individual creative portfolios, a global design firm directory and a database of job and project openings. The thriving community who visits the site daily represents a cross-section of the global design industry—working designers, design managers, internal and external hiring professionals, business managers of design firms, marketing and product management professionals, students and educators.

### About Core77

This event is produced by the New York-based design network, Core77 ([www.core77.com](http://www.core77.com)), with plans to present an annual showing. In addition to producing this exhibition, Core77 manages a number of design industry publications, event series and competitions. Their web sites serve an audience of more than 250,000 visitors and generate more than two million page views monthly.

