



PHAIDON

Kenneth Cobonpue, Cebu City

There is a generosity and boldness to Kenneth Cobonpue's designs that make them both accessible and aesthetically distinct. Space Age, organic, classically modernist, craft-based, sculptural – these are just a few thoughts that spring to mind on encountering his work. As a designer he utilizes a breadth of influences and ideas that perhaps come from his diverse design education – born in the Philippines, he studied at the Pratt Institute in New York and the Export-Akademie Baden-Württemberg in Reutlingen, Germany – as well as the rich tradition of design in his own family. His mother, Betty Cobonpue, started the design and manufacturing company that he now runs in the Philippines – Interior Crafts of the Islands, Inc. – and is herself famous for developing significant new techniques in working with rattan.

A key material for Cobonpue is rattan, which he uses with a mixture of industrial and natural materials such as steel, nylon wire, mahogany, cotton and abaca rope. His Yin & Yang armchair (1999), for example, uses rattan splits wrapped over a steel frame to create a form that is distinctly reminiscent of Le Corbusier but with a confident contemporary edge. And his Dragnet lounge chair (2005), inspired by fishnets moving through water, employs traditional Filipino weaving techniques but uses modern materials: polyester (indoor version) and Sunbrella fabric (outdoor version). With this variety of approach, Cobonpue's work pushes the boundaries of generic weaving into confidently industrial terrain.

Cobonpue has also pushed global boundaries: not only is he a designer, he is a manufacturer with a great understanding of the materials he is using, and an astute and charismatic businessman – qualities essential to get an Asian company noticed in a currently Western-orientated design world. Add to that Cobonpue's desire to promote Asian design internationally via Movement 8 – an alliance of Filipino designers who exhibit worldwide – and his role as a founding member of the Design Guild of the Philippines, and you have the complete package for a twenty-first-century global designer.

Tom Dixon



1-4

Voyage

Bed

2002

Interior Crafts of the
Islands, Inc.

Abaca or rattan vines,
steel, nylon filament

*The abaca or rattan vines
are skillfully woven over
a steel frame and tied with
nylon filament to create
a cosy cocoon for dreaming.*

5-9

YODA

Chair

2006

Interior Crafts of the
Islands, Inc.

Rattan vines, steel

*This chair cleverly utilizes
natural material tension
in its weaving, thereby
creating a very comfortable
and flexible seat.*



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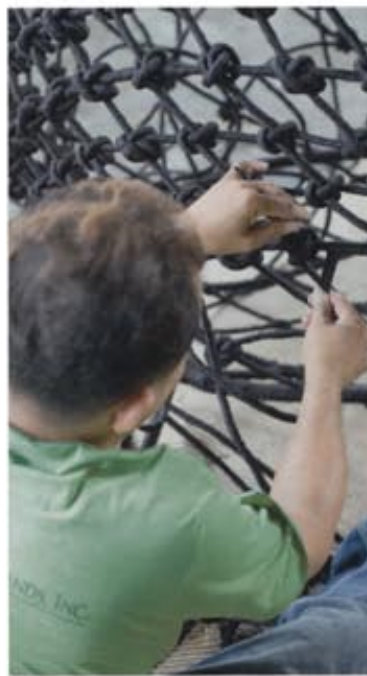
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10-15

Yin & Yang
Seating

1999
Interior Crafts of the
Islands, Inc.
Natural and dyed rattan
splits, wicker, steel,
stainless steel

*The Yin & Yang design
heralded a new era for
Cobonpue's company –
Interior Crafts of the
Islands, Inc. Its structure
and craftsmanship
represent the aesthetic
the company is known
for today.*

16-18

Balou
Seating

2002
Interior Crafts of the
Islands, Inc.
Rattan vines, abaca rope,
cotton twine, steel

*Balou was inspired by the
idea of being ensconced
in the warm embrace of
Balou – the bear in Kipling's
The Jungle Book.*

19-22

Dragnet
Lounge chair

2005
Interior Crafts of
the Islands, Inc.
Polycotton, powder-coated
steel, stainless steel

*The chair was inspired by
the movement of dragnets
in water.*



22