

gregg fleishman: play of geometry

using his unique technique and technology, this los angeles architect envisions playschool kitter parts as tessellations in space.



Gregg Fleishman, a native of Los Angeles is more than an architect; he is a designer, an innovator, and an artist. Born on July 4, 1947 Fleishman shares his birthday with his country- The United States of America- "the only country with a known birthday."

Fleishman has been a resident of Los Angeles suburb, Culver City for the past 40 years and has his own little studio and workshop in one of the city's most artistic corridors. Passionate about his designs and works, Fleishman says "My studio is my world, my own environment and my home is where I like to spend most of my time and is most close to my heart."

In 1970, this visionary designer graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Practicing with an architecture firm focusing on office designs for two years, Fleishman opened his own studio in 1972 and took a de-tour from mainstream architecture towards Structural and Industrial design. His studio focuses on industrial design covering a diversified range of products from shelter for the homeless to playground structures for the kids, from chairs and tables for the living room to "hot wheels" for the Culver City roads.

Using no tools other than his hands, Fleishman says, "you just need two opposable thumbs, 29 minutes and a mind as intelligent as a chimpanzee to transform puzzle like pieces of Finland Birch plywood into complicated structures and 3 dimensional spaces."

Equipped with the wonder and curiosity of a child, Fleishman finds inspiration when he spends time with kids. At the Play Mountain Place School founded by Fleishman's mother in 1949, he uses the playground and its inhabitants to test his experimental designs. His latest project, the "cluster structure" is a fun place for these tiny tots to hang, and Fleishman hopes to popularize this structure as a full scale version for a shelter design.

Although he is yet to apply his design and building principles to full scale architecture building, Fleishman is a theoretician with a social consciousness. "My goal is to develop blueprints for pre fabricated affordable housing worldwide", he declares.

Fleishman explains his design concepts in the most simplified forms such as putting together a toddler's Lego blocks to build a whole big complicated structure.

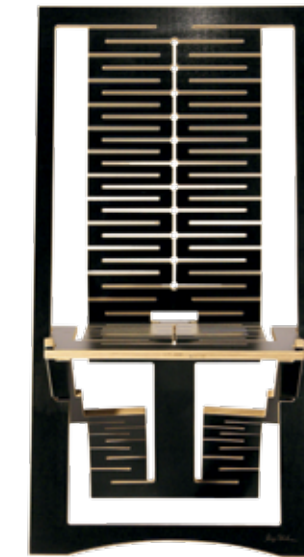
"The cluster," he says, "is an arrangement of solid wood panels joined together at the corners by using integral slots and notches and completely obviating the use of nuts and bolts."



nebula ii, 2002



alicia



lumberest dining chair

Fleishman coined the term "Rhombicube" referring to a diamond panel which is distilled out of a 3D checkerboard of cubes. The various truncations of the "Rhombicube" form the orthogonal variations of solids. The assembly of these solids in different configurations forms the geometrical basis of the shelter system in the Disaster Emergency Shelters.

The basic concept behind all his designs is functionality with ease in building and flexibility to expand.

Fleishman admires Buckminster Fuller as a pioneer, but he derives his own signature and style for designs and building. He lays emphasis on flexibility to expand and thus believes in geometry,

cubes and mathematics. Evolving design and forms out of sheet material, Fleishman focuses on developing ways and techniques to "make building easier".

Fleishman is "committed to continue to develop new ideas and have a portfolio of designs that is unparalleled."



playgoda, portable playground



rhombicube toy building kits



comeback cube

IFJ: Where do you draw a line between creativity and pragmatics?

GF: My work is mostly all about assembly. Be creative as much as you want, but at the end of the process, you should be able to build it – fabricate it. The approach I take by using sheet materials makes me flexible in design and form, but my purpose is always functionality and practicality!

IFJ: Who have been your inspirational designers or architects?

GF: I have pretty much always done stuff of my own and I believe in the signature of my own. But, for reference, I have studied the works of Buckminster Fuller very closely and also two more designers – Robert Wilson and John Peters who have worked on similar things, that is developing 3D spaces, but with a totally different approach. Where John works with complicated connectors and struts, I remain very simple in my approach towards assemblage.

Among the architects, I admire hi tech architects like Norman Foster. My chairs and tables reference influences as diverse as Greek key patterns, Chinese Fretwork and Boxy Bauhaus Forms.

IFJ: Why do geometric forms intrigue you more than freeform?

GF: I basically use sheet material and not the usual approach of using connectors and struts. Using a square or anything with an even number of edges like an octagon or a hexagon gives me the flexibility to expand. That's the reason I stick to geometrical forms instead of the dome or anything free form.

IFJ: What is your ultimate goal and what do you have to say to the architects and designers of tomorrow?

GF: I wish to develop the blueprint for affordable housing which can be used globally. Want the designers and architects of tomorrow to use these kitter parts that I have evolved from 30 years of research and experiment into their design and fabrication endeavors. ifj

Of the top of the head:

Beauty and perfection of form -
Anything that looks good - pleases the eye but reinforces its existence by a function.

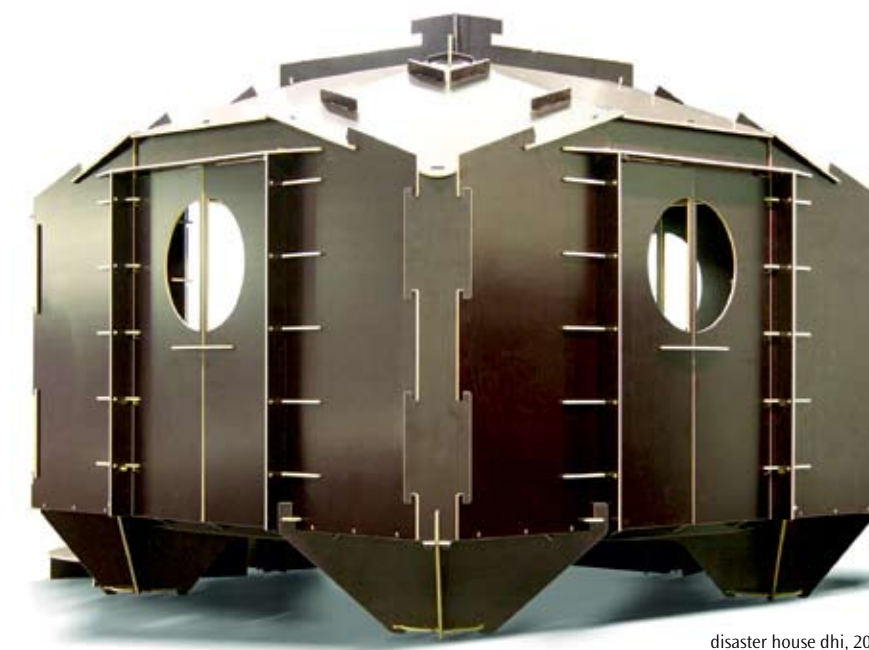
Functionality to you is -
As it is to anybody!

Passionate about -
My work, my designs... pretty much everything here!

...keeps you going and growing?
The magical feedback on my work.



shelter system



disaster house dhi, 2007