



January 2013

## Editor's letter

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### Recommended Citation

(2013) "Editor's letter," *SIGNED: The Magazine of The Hong Kong Design Institute*: , 2-3.

Available at: <https://repository.vtc.edu.hk/ive-de-signed/vol5/iss5/3>

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ARNOLD BENNETT

EDITOR'S LETTER

ISSUE

In recent conversations with design masters like Alan Chan, Douglas Young, Yohji Yamamoto, Charles Kaisin, Riccardo Tisci, Romeo Gigli, Boris Berlin and Thomas Coldefy a pattern emerged. All complained to me or one of my writers about how commerce has smothered creativity in fashion, product design and architecture, leading to a dull and depressing homogeneity. I liked the way the issue was expressed recently by a 15-year veteran of the fashion industry who told me that women's fashion has become like a spaghetti Bolognese, a mess of strands from multiple and random inspirations combined with a cloying mix of incoherent references. This was almost exactly the same complaint that was made by fashion giant Romeo Gigli, who is profiled on page 16. Thankfully, there was another common theme among all these designers, each of whom has changed the face of their industry. They all wanted to see design take a more radical path, with less concern for commercial success and with more commitment to diversity, sustainability and innovation. And that's why ingenuity is the theme for this fifth edition of SIGNED magazine. Ingenuity is the red blood of design, without it creativity becomes a sluggish stream of anaemic froth, dribbling through the veins of the design industry like weak tea. Winston Churchill once said, "There is no limit to the

ingenuity of man" and he was right, but there is a limit to how people apply their ingenuity, which can be constrained by politics or poverty, or by forces that want less innovation. Thus we have assembled here a collection of stories that pay tribute to ingenuity. In the following pages Berlin, Gigli, Yamamoto, Chan, Young, Charles Kaisin, Thomas Coldefy and Isabel Van Haute all talk about how ingenuity has fuelled their work, and the benefits it has produced. The American thinker Paul Romer has defined the space between a challenge and a solution as "the ingenuity gap". In design, this gap is usual the main obstacle to the success of any project. Ingenuity offers a way to see the world from a unique perspective and that's the best way to turn a challenge into a design solution that can change the way we live.

**DANIEL JEFFREYS**  
*Editor-In-Chief*