

Bangkok

Thai Ideas in **DESIGN**

Textiles and
Furniture

Brian Merte

Photos Robert McLe



“Design is not always tangible, nor is it restricted to product features. Design can be taste, scent, etc., as long as it serves our criteria or pleasure.”





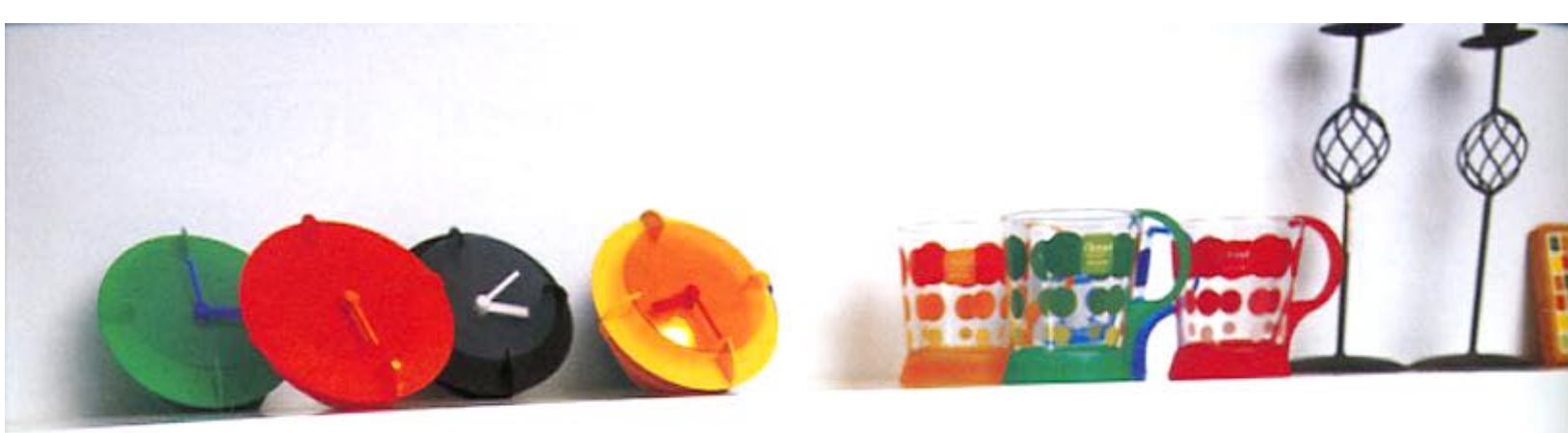
PRIMA CHAKRABANDHU NA AYUDHYA

of IceDEA



**MATABLE FOLDING TABLE/
MAT, 2004.** *Woven tatami reeds.*
A convertible design for dining
or seating. Its light weight and
foldability make it useful for a
small room or to take outdoors.

PALATABLE Although she is best known for what might be called 'the thinking person's ice-cream', Prima Chakrabandhu na Ayudhya has also devised cool concepts in graphics, fashion, furniture and other categories. A graduate of Chulalongkorn University's industrial design programme, she takes a systematic approach to each project, arriving at solutions that combine at least two strong features or functions in one. Her invention in a Department of Export Promotion design workshop focusing on nature and craft, for example, was the Matable, a portable tatami mat that can be folded up to form a low table. This design embodies a pair of dual approaches to both nature and craft. Intended for use amid natural surroundings at picnics, it is made purely of natural materials, the reeds woven to form the tatami matting. Craft is embedded not only in its woven construction, but also in the end-user's act of folding it up like a piece of origami sculpture. Multi-dimensional ideas like this won Prima a coveted stint at Fabrica, Benetton's exclusive think tank, from 2005 through 2006.





OPPOSITE: COLOUR-BLIND CONCEPT ICE CREAMS, 2004. *Ice cream with natural flavouring and colouring. A Siam Square shop branded its focus on brightly colourful products by serving IceDEA flavours created with misleading colours.*

ABOVE: EARL GRAY, WATERMELON AND GRASS JELLY ICE CREAMS, 2004. *Ice cream with natural flavouring and colouring. Prima applied 'found' designs at Jerlot Coffee Space (www.jerlot.com)*

Before forming her consultancy IceDEA: Ideas in Ice Cream in 2004, Prima received a diploma in creamery science, in order to master what she terms ice-cream theory. IceDEA's concept is to offer ice cream as both product and branding tool. Prima consults with the client to develop new types of ice cream fitting their special needs, innovating flavour, texture, colour, presentation and name. This purpose-made ice cream then becomes part of the client's identity. Some clients are corporations that want to use ice cream for promotional purposes. Most are cafés and restaurants that want to offer their own unique frozen desserts rather than the standard vanilla/strawberry/chocolate. At Jerlot Coffee Space, for example, she did away with traditional scoop servings to present each custom flavour in a figurative style. Earl Gray ice cream is served in a teacup. Watermelon flavour looks like a wedge of fruit. A cornflakes-and-milk blend is served in a breakfast cereal bowl. Playful graphics perk up tableware and staff uniforms.

For Art's Cafe, IceDEA created a trio of custom flavours to match the colour scheme of the interior and menu graphics, which are black, white and red. The ice cream flavours are strawberry, liquorice and Oreo cookie. The dessert is served on a dish shaped like a painter's colour palette.

Her most unusual ice-cream idea was her colour-blind concept, a collection that plays tricks on the taste buds because flavours and appearance are deliberately mismatched. Red ice-cream tastes like green tea. Bright green has the flavour of strawberry. Pink conceals chocolate. The client was a shop proposed for trendy Siam Square that planned to specialise in houseware and accessories in very bright colours.

While the design discipline of corporate identity traditionally focuses on logos, colours, signage and other graphic applications, IceDEA shows that non-visual vehicles can powerfully convey identity. Prima's ice cream is a calling card that lodges in the customer's most intimate sense memory—of taste, aroma and texture. With this in mind, Listerine engaged IceDEA to create a mouthwash-flavour ice cream to serve at the launch event for a new product. Prima promotes IceDEA at exhibitions by handing out samples of her cigarette flavour, served from an ashtray. This ice cream has an intense bouquet of menthol tobacco smoke.



angkok DESIGN is the first book of its kind, exploring the acclaimed new furnishings of Thailand and the inspiration behind them.

This book profiles 36 of the best Thai designers, showing how they translate their own cultural and personal experiences into original products. This group explores a wide variety of styles—minimalist, expressionist, modernist, neo-traditional, retro and pop—but each designer has an individual signature. The profiles include several studio artists whose work either has decorative characteristics or offers thoughtful comments on design-related issues such as cultural identity and sustainability.

This inspiring book, beautifully photographed by Robert McLeod and lucidly written by award-winning author Brian Mertens, will appeal to interior designers, architects and collectors.

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