



Decoding Malaysian Design

The founders of a couple of homegrown furniture brands on reclaiming traditional Malaysian designs

KEDAI BIKIN

Chancing upon a retro round chair with colourful weaves of rubber strings in local cafes and boutiques is quite common, especially when the uber-cool seat is recognised as a signature of Kedai Bikin. You may remember a more antiquated version of the chair in its long form, with the option of extending the furniture to laze on—the stripes of the PVC rubber's colours fading in due course.

"At Kedai Bikin, we're inspired by our own traditions and cultural offerings with the added ability to revitalise and refine the technicalities of local design and craft," stated the co-founders of the architectural and interior design consultancy, Adela Askandar and Farah Azizan, who even made a mini project out of the photo shoot with Tatler Living. Shuffling and carrying the furniture in the corner of the studio, they curated a space that would showcase their unique designs and fine craftsmanship from the coffee table down to their weaved tray.

Right: The Merdeka Chair is a signature design. Opposite: Adela is seated on a lounge chair called La Paloma as Farah stands behind

Constantly enabling the appreciation of an aesthetic that is contemporary Malaysian, the duo describe the look and feel of their brand as "a set of principles concerned with the nature and gratitude for beauty or its philosophy. However, it is a process that is also constantly evolving." Mixing materials like rattan, rubber and powder steel, Studio Bikin in hindsight seems like a playground of intelligent and eccentric



interior pieces that if set in a bare room, could easily have been mistaken for artwork.

An objective that has maintained throughout their establishment since 2012, is to get the best out of the working relationship between designer and maker. Adela explained, "Kedai Bikin works directly with the artisans involved so that they benefit from these commissions. Most of the items are carefully sourced from local and regional artisans and craftsmen, with each piece having provenance so that customers know what they're getting." With the tagline "Why fake it when you can make it," Kedai Bikin's approach to craft making is that of having an attitude towards design.