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The Artful Designer

Barbie-phobia, fairytale designs and leather jacket-handbags,
Winnie Chau talks to Hong Kong's hottest fashion designers about the rebirth of cool.



Hoiming

"Mischievously elegant" is probably the best way to describe the handmade handbags by Hoiming. "Without mischief the world would be boring," says Hoiming Fung who co-founded the brand with her partner Baldwin Pui in 2006.

It's this irreverent approach to design which inspired their "One-of-a-Kind" collection of vintage leather jackets transformed into body-hugging bags. Another playful collection is "Recess," which was influenced by Pui's happiest moments as a primary school boy. Each design was influenced by a playground action like "skip," "bend" and "revolve."

The duo's mission is to create bags with surprises. To them it's about exploring new ways to carry things, challenging notions of usage and breaking the stereotypical form and function of what a "handbag" should be.

Influenced by her tailor mother, Fung was only a child when she started making clothes for her dolls, sister and herself. But she was a rebellious soul and intentionally strayed from her mother's path, choosing to study graphic design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Although she soon

realized it was a mistake, it did result in her meeting Pui who was studying fashion design there. The couple discovered they shared similar fashion aspirations and set out to challenge the idea of what a handbag can be. They didn't want to re-style existing designs in the market and sought to break free from the traditional shape of cookie-cutter bags. Since graduating in 2000, they have won many awards including Asian Young Designer of 2002.

Recently, they attended trade shows in Paris and Milan and, despite their faith in the originality of their brand, say they realize success is unlikely to come overnight. But nothing will stop them. "If you have an idea in mind, actualize it"—it's a motto the duo follow faithfully and hope other aspiring designers will follow too.

Hoiming's collections are available at DNM, 68 Yee Wo St., Causeway Bay, 2577-6988. Harvey Nichols, 4/F, The Landmark, 15 Queen's Rd., Central, 3695-3388. Voulez Vous, 3 Yiu Wa St., Bartlock Centre, Causeway Bay, 2833-0938.

www.hoiming.net

