

## CHAIRS, WOOD and TALENT

*Tomás Alonso, Paolo Cappello and Daniel Fintzi are the winners of the **Promosedia International Design Competition 2008 – Caiazza Memorial Challenge** that calls on young designers from all over the world to compete on a contemporary project that enhances the most ancient of all materials - wood.*

**Chair and wood.** The first is never easy to make, and one needs to love the latter, to be able to recognise its links with tradition and know how to start from here to create designs that interpret the present. It is not an easy challenge, that which for twelve years the Promosedia International Design Competition – Caiazza Memorial Challenge has offered to architects, designers, students enrolled in Architecture Faculties and Design Institutes from all over the world. But hundreds of young people – strictly under the age of 40 – whose nationalities span the world, are always ready to take up the challenge. It happened again this year: over three hundred designers showed the will to put themselves on the line in tracing their own contemporary vision of an object-archetype - the chair.

Precisely the balance between tradition and new visual language achieved by **Tomás Alonso** in the design of **Nube Chair** fully responded to the purpose of the competition and earned the Spanish designer the award of the First Prize.

Alonso, already distinguished on the young international design scene for some interesting designs and his participation in important exhibitions, chose to adopt a traditional technique - that of steam bent wood - and to take inspiration from the most classic of all models, the Thonet chair. The result is a design that is anything other than predictable: a few essential lines outline a complex structure, composed of seven sections made from bent wood, joined to form three rings. Nube breaks away from classic structures, expresses lightness, bends the wood according to new perspectives and expresses a vein of romanticism in its recall to tradition.

As with other designs by Tomás, the design elements are simple, but it is combining them that Alonso finds innovative and unusual effects, thus deriving complex structures from basic essentials and creating personal development paths.

**Tomás'** approach to design arises from the continuous discovery of new realities, from contacts with different styles, from studies and exhibitions that made him travel far. Born in Vigo, Spain, in 1974, Alonso now lives and works in London, although the English capital is just one of the many cities he has lived in. America, Australia, England, France and Italy are some of the places he frequented. A wealth of many experiences, despite his tender age.

In addition to Nube, the competition yielded five other winners and two honourable mentions.

The first is an all-Italian one: that awarded to **Paolo Cappello** for the **Iri** chair. A graduate in Industrial Design from Milan Polytechnic, Cappello collaborates with the Palomba Serafini Associati studio in Milan. He has received several awards and commendations at design and graphics competitions on a national and international level.

Iri expresses the reduction of the sign to its minimal levels and through a very few essential features and the measure of the whole succeeds in conveying the concept, function, material nature and detail that determine the identity of a chair.

The other honourable mention was awarded to **Daniel Fintzi** for the **Askew** chair. Of Israeli origin, Fintzi chose Shanghai as his professional base after graduating in Industrial Design at the European Institute of Design in Milan and having worked in Paris and London.

Askew is the perfect harmony between contemporary tensions, expressed through the axes of the frame, and the reassuring image of a classic chair, obtained through the skilful use of a traditional material such as wood. The profile of the structure is alive and confers a strong identity to this product intended for both residential and contract use.

Promosedia International Design Competition 2008 – Caiazza Memorial Challenge also selected three further designs, considered particularly worthy of a Special Mention: **Half-a-Chair = (0.5) C** by Ricky and Tommy Yuen (Hong Kong) – a modular and sectional chair, easy to use in public places – **Blizzard of August** by Alexey Sabirullov (Russia) – a chair that evokes a simple and strong image that suggestively recalls nature – and **Also** by Akin Bacioglu (Turkey) – a chair that successfully performs a twofold function, that of a chair and desk.

The **authoritative Jury of international professionals** endowed with the task of selecting the 2008 winning designs was composed of: Luisa Bocchietto (architect, designer and national Chairperson of ADI); Philippe Bestenheider (designer); Paola Carimati (Design and Trends journalist for Elle Décor Italy); Bénédicte Duhalde (Editor-in-chief of the French publication Intramuros); Fabio Feruglio (Director of the Scientific and Technological Park "L. Danieli" in Udine); Daniele Lattanzi (Friulgiulia Area manager at Banca Friuladria – Crédit Agricole) and Matteo Tonon (President of Promosedia SpA).