

STYLE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2009

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This holiday season, delight your loved ones and support Taiwanese designers, artists and craftspeople. Most of the following brands are independently operated and have budget-friendly prices. Chances are you'll have some cash left over to treat yourself, too.

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Are you facing a gift deadline? Run over to 16 Workshops (16工房), a cluster of boutiques operated by young Taiwanese designers in the back of Red House Theater. T-shirts specialists include Betelnut (檳榔), Mago Life Shop and '0416 T-shirt Shop. For jewelry, visit Dragonfly Yazhu Colored Glass Bead Studio (蜻蜓雅築) for items with motifs found in the art of the Paiwan tribe, Georgia Tsao for cute sterling silver pendants and Steven's Glass Wonderland (瑞想園) for handmade glass items in an eye-popping assortment of colors and funky shapes. Address: Red House Theater (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號) Telephone: (02) 2311-9380 On the Net: www.redhouse.org.tw

The range of items available at 16 Workshops is wide, but if you still haven't found the perfect gift, wait until the weekend for the Red House Market for Artists & Designers (西門紅樓創意市集). The fair, which takes place every week in front of Red House Theater, gives fledgling brands a chance to showcase their work. Prices at the market are extremely reasonable, with many items, including handmade clothing, bags, toys and sterling silver jewelry, selling for under NT\$1,000. On the Net: redhousetaipei.blogspot.com

Red House Theater's small gift shop in the main building also carries an assortment of stationery and gift items from Taiwanese designers. Stands-out include foldable paper models of Taiwan's landmarks by Monkey Design (猴子設計) and miniature lampshades by Islander Studio (島民工作室), a graphic design team that creates home accessories inspired by Taiwan's ecology. The company also has a combination studio, gallery and cafe at 95, Chaozhou Rd, Taipei City (台北市潮州街95號), tel: (02) 2396-9208. On the Net: www.islanders-studio.com

BANGLE, BAUBLES AND BEADS

Primary Silver's (元銀手作) handmade sterling silver jewelry ranges in style from abstract to intricately detailed, including a bracelet that wraps around the wrist like a wreath of leaves (NT\$3,680). Less expensive items include little pendants representing each animal of the Chinese zodiac (NT\$1,680) and earrings shaped like lily pads (NT\$980 per pair). Address: 11, Longquan St, Taipei City (台北市龍泉街11號) Telephone: (02) 3365-2579 On the Net: tw.myblog.yahoo.com/allure-silver

Beader Venice (彼得威尼斯) is located a few blocks away on Longquan Street. Designer Louis Chiang (江奕辰) takes the centuries old craft of Venetian glass and combines it with colors and patterns inspired by current fashion trends, as well as motifs from Chinese and Taiwanese culture. Prices range from NT\$220 for a cellphone charm to long necklaces made with an array of beads for NT\$3,280. Address: 102 Longquan St, Taipei City (台北市龍泉街102號) Telephone: (02) 2364-6563 On the Net: www.beadervenice.com

BETTER LIVING THROUGH DESIGN

The Eslite on Dunhua South Road (誠品敦南店) is currently hosting a show of items by emerging Taiwanese designers. If you attended last September's Taiwan Designers' Week (台灣設計師週) and regretted not snapping up something, you just might find it again at No Electricity, We Design (設計不插電), which runs until Jan. 3. Highlights include a set of stainless steel fruit picks designed to look like traditional Taiwanese weaponry by Sekond (西肯設計) for NT\$900, 4plus Design's NT\$650 notebooks with crocheted covers (patterns are included for needle workers), and grenade-shaped coin banks by 21 biaugust (on sale for NT\$780 from NT\$1,280). Address: 245, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段245號B1) Telephone: (02) 2775-5977

The fourth floor of Eslite's flagship store in Xinyi (誠品信義店) also has several places where you can find home items, clothing and accessories by Taiwanese artists and designers. CD Piazza (www.cdplazza.com, tel: (02) 8789-3388 X1404) carries handmade wallets, pencil bags, bracelets, rings and necklaces, many for under NT\$700. 25togo Design Store's (www.25togo.com, tel: (02) 8789-3388 X3215) wares come from all over the world, but many Taiwanese brands are represented, including hao shi's (www.haoshi.com.tw) eerie but whimsical all-white



Made in Taiwan, gifted with love

Celebrate the season of giving with presents made in Taiwan by indie designers and artists

BY CATHERINE SHU
STAFF REPORTER



animal-shaped resin pendants and rings (NT\$1,880). Their tooth fairy pendant is shaped like a perfect molar and a relative bargain at NT\$880.

For something a little more *ke ai* (可愛), check out Mao's Dolls (tw.myblog.yahoo.com/mimivickie, tel: 0953-538-286). Prices range from NT\$350 for a plush keychain or cellphone charm to NT\$650 for a hand-sewn doll or fabric case. A branch of the ubiquitous T-shirt brand Pizza Cut Five is nearby, as is Paintrack (www.foufou.com.tw/paintrack, tel: 0966-682-

239) which sells sweatshirts, tees and bags by different Taiwanese graphic designers (most are priced between NT\$419 and NT\$1,280), as well as Taipei Bremen's irreverent decals for NT\$40 per sticker. Address: 5F, 11 Songgao Rd, Taipei City (台北市松高路11號5樓) Telephone: (02) 8789-3388

IT'S YOUR BAG, BABY

For large canvas carry-alls and T-shirts made from soft cotton, head over to Booday (蔴荖) near Zhongshan MRT Station (中山捷運站). The lifestyle brand also sells aprons and notebooks, as well as items by independent brands, such as Miao's Marmalade, isopap and various jewelry designers. Notebooks are NT\$180 to NT\$300, T-shirts and hoodies are NT\$650 to NT\$1,600, and Booday's signature canvas carry-alls with multiple pockets are NT\$3,200 to NT\$3,800. Address: 18-1, Ln 25, Nanjing W Rd, Taipei City (台北市南京西路25巷18-1號) Telephone: (02) 2552-5552 X11 On the Net: www.mogu.com.tw

Booday's neighbor is Lovely Taiwan (台灣好·店), an extraordinary store that carries crafts from villages and Aboriginal tribes all over Taiwan. Items include hand-carved wooden animals from Sanyi Township (三義鄉), Miaoli County, bags by members of Aboriginal tribes in Jinfeng Township (金峰鄉), Taitung County, and scarves woven by Yetong Workshop (野桐工坊), whose goal is to preserve traditional Taiya fiber art. Prices are extremely reasonable considering the amount of work that goes into each item, with many items in the NT\$500 to NT\$1,500 range. Address: 18-2, Ln 25, Nanjing W Rd, Taipei City (台北市南京西路25巷18-2號) Telephone: (02) 2558-2616

If one of your gift recipients loves the rich, heady smell of new leather, visit Figure 21 in the East District (東區). Former graphic designers Darren Hsieh (謝政倫) and Phoebe Chang (張雯惠) make bags and accessories that are designed to showcase the original form of the skin each piece is crafted from. Bags range from NT\$2,000 to NT\$8,000. Accessories, including wallets and eyeglass cases, are NT\$2,000 to NT\$3,000. Address: 1-6, Alley 29, Ln 205, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段205巷29弄1-6號) Telephone: (02) 8771-4498 On the Net: www.wretch.cc/blog/figure21

COUNTRY MUSIC

You'll find an encyclopedic selection of CDs by Taiwan's indie rock bands in White Wabbit's (小白兔) two record stores. One is located near Shida on Pucheng Street, the other inside The Wall (這牆) off Roosevelt Road. Address: 1-1, Ln 21, Pucheng St, Taipei City (台北市浦城街21巷1-1號) Telephone: (02) 2369-7915 Address: B1, 200 Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1) Telephone: (02) 8935-1454 On the Net: www.wwr.com.tw

If there are small children or new parents on your gift list, consider giving them Chen Mingchang's (陳明章) recently released *Taiwanese Children's Songs* (陳明章的台灣國仔歌). Chen, a former member of groundbreaking group Blacklist Studio (黑名單工作室), takes traditional Hoklo (commonly known as Taiwanese) nursery rhymes and poems, as well as his own lyrics, and sets them to original music. The two-disc set is packaged with a beautifully illustrated book, sheet music and a pamphlet with explanatory notes in English. *Taiwanese Children's Songs* is NT\$599 in Eslite's music stores or NT\$429 at books.com.tw (mail order only).

THE LITTLE THINGS

Gift-hunting for a typophile? Then take a trip to Ri Xing Typography (日星鑄字行) near Taipei Main Station. The tiny factory houses the last complete set of traditional Chinese character molds for lead-type casting in the world. Ri Xing is open to visitors for a few hours each week (call ahead to confirm hours or check Ri Xing's Web site). Individual lead type can be purchased for NT\$1 to NT\$80 per piece. Address: 13, Ln 97, Taiyuan Rd, Taipei City (台北市太原路97巷13號) Telephone: (02) 2556-4626 On the Net: rixingtypography.blogspot.com

Yuan Soap (阿原肥皂)'s bath products are made using herbs grown in Taiwan. The company's best-selling soap is soothing mugwort (艾草), which is also made with verbena, green tea and lemongrass, olive and grape seed oils. Individual soaps cost NT\$250 or NT\$300 per bar. Gift boxes with shampoo or washcloths are available for NT\$500 to NT\$1,580. One store is located in Sogo Department Store's Zhongxiao branch. Address: 9F, 45, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段45號9F) Telephone: (02) 7711-7110 On the Net: www.taiwansoap.com.tw

And, finally, every gift list is bound to have a sweet tooth (or two) on it. Make them happy with treats from Is Taiwan, Is Chocolate near Shida. The small cafe sells truffles by Taipei-based chocolate brand Henry & Cary, as well as fruit vinegar made in Taichung, gourmet coffee beans roasted in small batches and ground by hand in Kaohsiung and Italian-style pasta sauce made with locally-grown ingredients. Address: 9-3, Ln 13, Pucheng St, Taipei City (台北市浦城街13巷9-3號) Telephone: (02) 2366-1364 On the Net: www.istaiwan.com.tw



Steven's Glass Wonderland, located in 16 Workshops behind Red House Theater, sells colorful, funky jewelry.

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES



Above: All of Primary Silver's sterling silver jewelry is handcrafted in its small storefront near Shida night market. Right: Cute hand-sewn stuffed animals and accessories are a specialty of Mao's Dolls.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES



Above left: Many of Booday's soft T-shirts are made with organic cotton and plant dyes. Above center: Movable type in traditional Chinese characters is available at Ri Xing Typography. Above right: Yuan Soap's bath products are made with natural ingredients and spring water from Taiwan. Right: Is Taiwan, Is Chocolate near Shida sells truffles by Taipei-based chocolate maker Henry & Cary, as well as other gourmet goodies.

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