

STYLE

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Jamie Chou and Wayne Chang's label sticks to black and white to emphasize the lines of its unisex designs and convey a subtle religious message

BY CATHERINE SHU
STAFF REPORTER



DEEPLAY'S design signature is sleek, black-and-white clothing, and the brand's new boutique near National Taiwan Normal University reflects that minimalist aesthetic. But underneath its cool exterior, Deeplay conveys its founders' passion for electronic music — and Jesus.

"We're inspired by the emotions we have when we listen to music. Our designs and the cut of our clothes don't follow the usual rules," says Deeplay co-founder Jamie Chou (趙玉婷). "It's hard to put into words, but it's about feeling."

Chou and Wayne Chang (張嘉斌), her boyfriend and business partner, started off as event promoters in 2005, throwing electronic music parties at venues like The Wall (這牆) and Luxy.

But the couple says Deeplay is about more than just making merry: The brand's slogan is "Make culture, not party."

"When people think of parties, they think of drinking, chasing after girls they like. It's all about fun," says Chou. "But to us, parties are about people with similar interests connecting, sharing ideas and the music they like."

Deeplay has hosted parties for local premieres of indie films, including a costume bash for the French production *Mister Lonely*, about a Michael Jackson impersonator. "The movie is about how each person pretends to be someone else. It's about playing a role, so we asked people to dress up as someone they want to be," says Chou.

Many of Deeplay's other parties also included a style element. Chang and Chou invited indie designers to show their clothing before deciding to launch their own line two years ago.

"We thought, we like fashion so much, why don't we try our hands at design?" says Chang.

The duo stick to a monochrome color scheme to emphasize the silhouettes and lines of their designs, most of which are unisex. Deeplay's black 2-Way tops can be worn either long-sleeved or short-sleeved; an oversized white button-down shirt is printed with three black triangles that point toward the face. A pair of harem pants with shiny black patches down each leg looks rugged on the hanger but drapes fluidly when worn.

The store also carries imported items including clothing by Sweden's Cheap Monday, as well as heavy studded leather jewelry by Taiwanese designer Minerva. Clothing made by Los Angeles' Gas'd exclusively for Deeplay will debut next month.

Keeping the faith

Deeplay's sleek designs are reminiscent of Hedi Slimane and Martin Margiela, two of the couple's favorite designers. Like Slimane, Chang and Chou derive inspiration from electronic music. A DJ spins records every Wednesday and Friday at the boutique, which is also the scene of a party each month (the next event is a barbeque for the Mid-Autumn Festival).

Chang first started listening to electronica a decade ago, when he was a music student in university. His first CD was Josh Wink's *Higher State of Consciousness*. When Paul Oakenfold was scheduled to play here in 1999, Chang, who had just turned 18, jumped at the opportunity to hear a famous DJ. Unfortunately, the day Oakenfold arrived was also the day of a nationwide blackout.

"He ended up not performing, but someone turned on a generator and we all kept dancing. It was a very special evening. It was crazy," says Chang. The duo's favorite acts currently include artists on the Dim Mak record label, such as Mustard Pimp, as well as Erol Alkan, Flying Lotus and Caribou.

"We aren't picky. If it's good music we enjoy listening to it," says Chang.

Chang and Chou are equally passionate about their faith. Chou, who was raised Christian, started taking her boyfriend to church about a year ago to help Chang deal with a bout of the blues. The two are planning a clothing line inspired by the Bible for autumn, with quotes printed onto the fabric.

"There's a lot about religion that is fun. Young people think 'Oh, how old-fashioned!' but we think about new ways to express our faith," says Chou.

The religious inspiration on their current items is subtler. For the opening of the Deeplay boutique, Chang and Chou collaborated with indie singer-songwriter Waa Wei (魏如萱), a church friend. The line's signature item is a black hooded poncho screen-printed with the silhouette of a man who has a tree emerging from his chest, like blood vessels from a heart. The image is based on one of Wei's songs, but there is a double meaning.

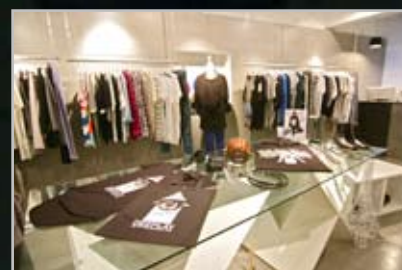
"We believe that God is a tree and each of us are branches of that tree," says Chang.

Now he and Chou privately refer to their label as "Deeplay," which is also the name of an electronic music/gospel gathering they held at Luxy last November.

"A lot of young people think being religious means being repressed, but we want to show them that God is about creativity," says Chou. "Our creativity is a gift from God."

DEEPLAY

ADDRESS: 17, Ln 13, Pucheng St,
Taipei City (台北市浦城街13巷17號)
OPEN: 3pm to 11pm
TELEPHONE: (02) 2369-2310
ON THE NET:
www.wretch.cc/blog/deeplay



Above: Jamie Chou, left, and Wayne Chang's design inspiration comes from electronic music and religion.

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