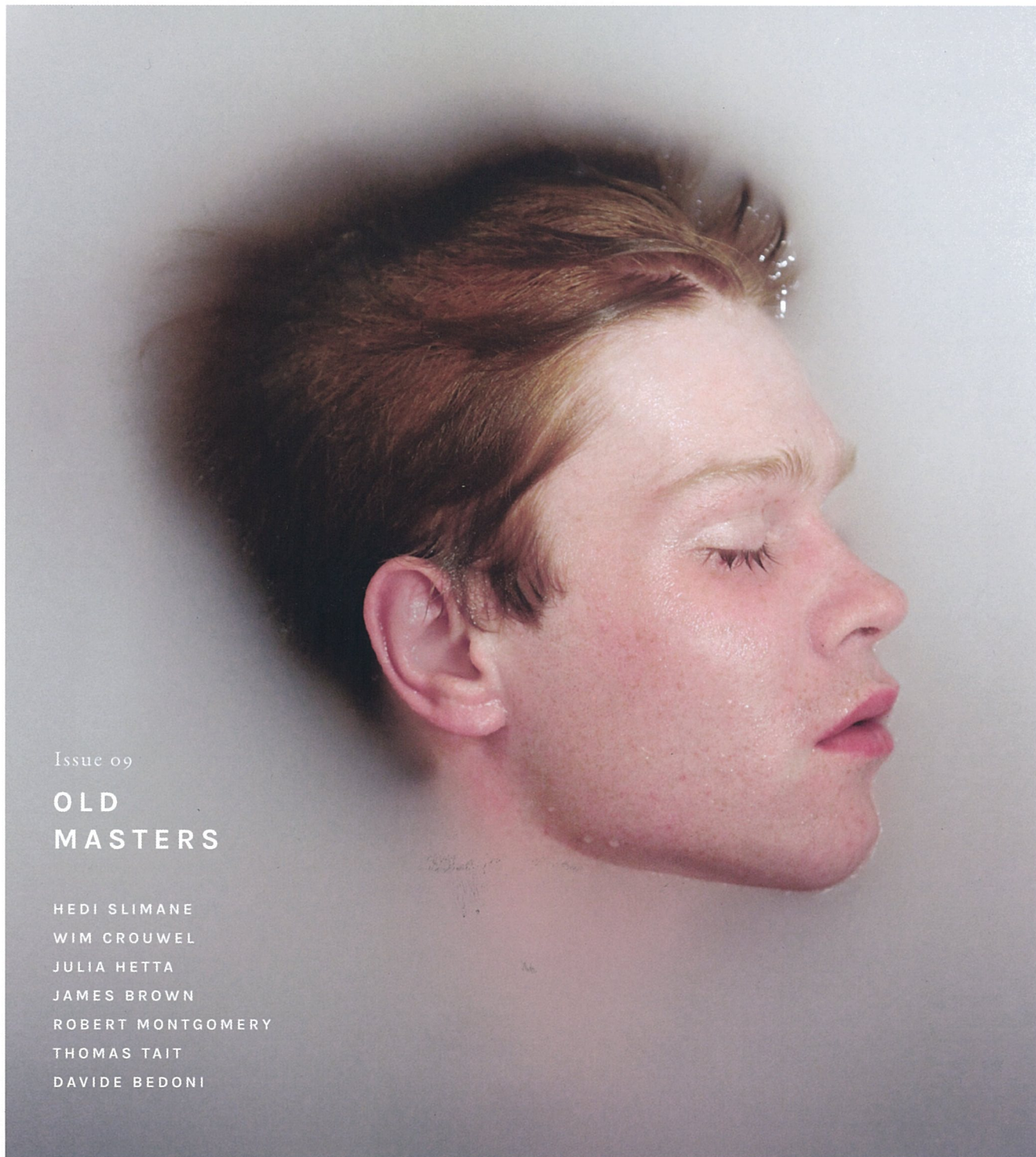


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OLD MASTERS

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PRINTED MATTER

In the electronic age, do bookstores need rethinking to ensure longevity? We asked three local interior and design firms to create the bookstore of their dreams.

Traditional book selling has been hit particularly hard by the shift to online shopping. Still, independent bookstores inspire great affection, but they will certainly require innovation to ensure survival. At the same time, design alone will not save the bookshop; the solution needs to be much more fundamental, informed and strategic. Could it evolve to be able to anticipate literary needs? Could the enhanced experience of book reading be manifested through the spatial design?

Curious to explore this new territory, we asked three leading design studios to create a store—one set in the encroaching digital age. We gave each practice—Asylum, Dear Design Studio and She Designs, He Builds—an exact brief. They were to design the mockup of an independent, general interest bookstore in an existing or imagined space, while incorporating elements that could possibly ensure the sustainability of bookstores. In response, we received arresting concepts, clever innovations and new takes on the idea of the bookstore.

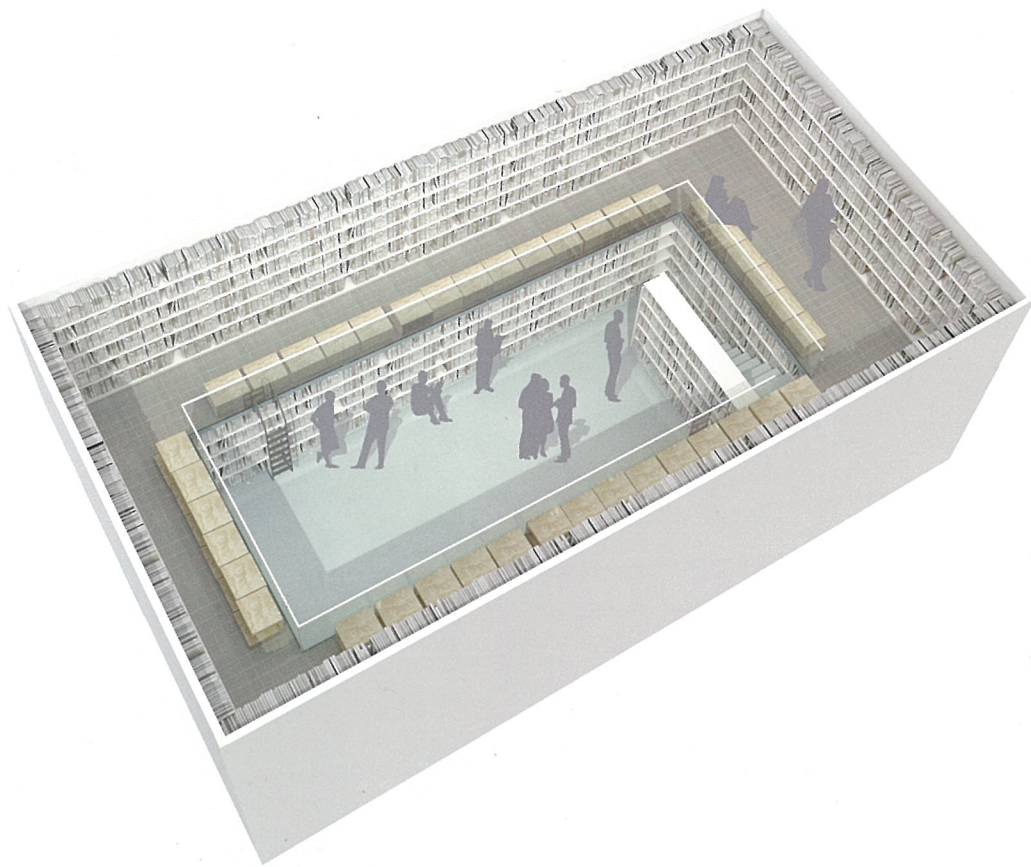
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THE BOOKPOOL

Studio: Asylum

Designer: Chris Lee, Natalia Bura

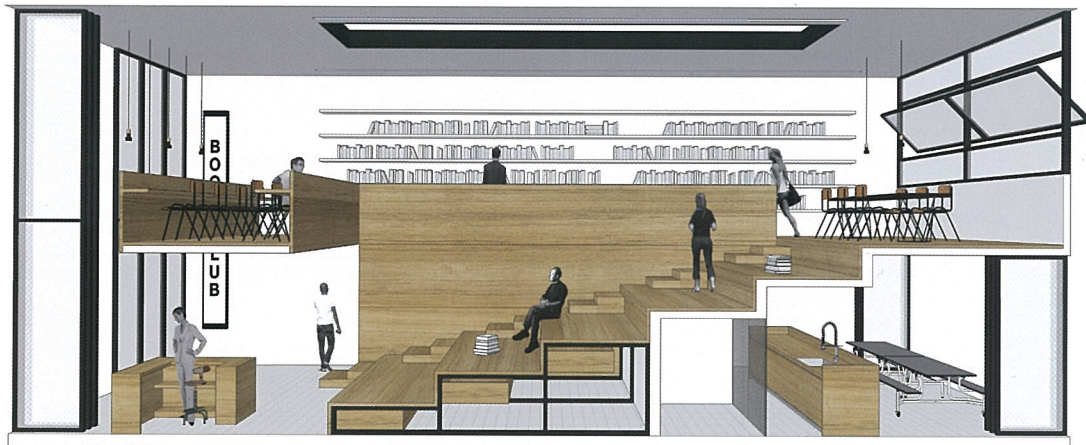


Gone are the days where huge generalised bookstores pander to the interest of readers. Instead, the space of the future bookstore is scaled down, offering a specialized, curated selection of good reads. Moving away from the notion of the virtual world where human interaction is limited, our ideal of a future bookstore presents itself as a modular space that promotes interaction and socializing. Inspired by the idea of a swimming pool where both leisurely relaxation and intensive swimming occur concurrently, the space comes alive by separating itself into dual levels that creates different levels of engagement. Level one, an intimate, contained space, is envisioned to host events such as book signings and workshops, giving rise to a social platform for the like-minded to come together, facilitating discussion and creativity.

Level two distinguishes itself through vertical distance, providing for readers who would prefer their own quiet space while remaining aware of events on level one. The dual lev-

els effectively segments the differing levels of intimacy and involvement within the bookstore, while allowing everyone to be involved in common occurrences.

Benches are placed throughout the cozy space to encourage easy connection with strangers, allowing readers to engage in casual conversations as they get comfortable within their own spaces and the like-minded come together. On the other hand, level two, at a further distance from level one, is designed for those who would prefer their own quiet space.



BOOK CLUB

Studio: *She Designs, He Builds*

Designer: *Laura Phay*

Personal time is scarcer in this digital age—the 'downtime' reading a regular person most commonly enjoys is often express and mobile. When time is finally made for the purpose of relaxing, it is most often done so in a café environment. Reading complements this activity perfectly—but a café is an unpredictable space with limitations to crowd influx and behavioral control.

BOOK CLUB is envisioned as a 'Members Only' bookstore-café hybrid, a designated avenue to decompress.

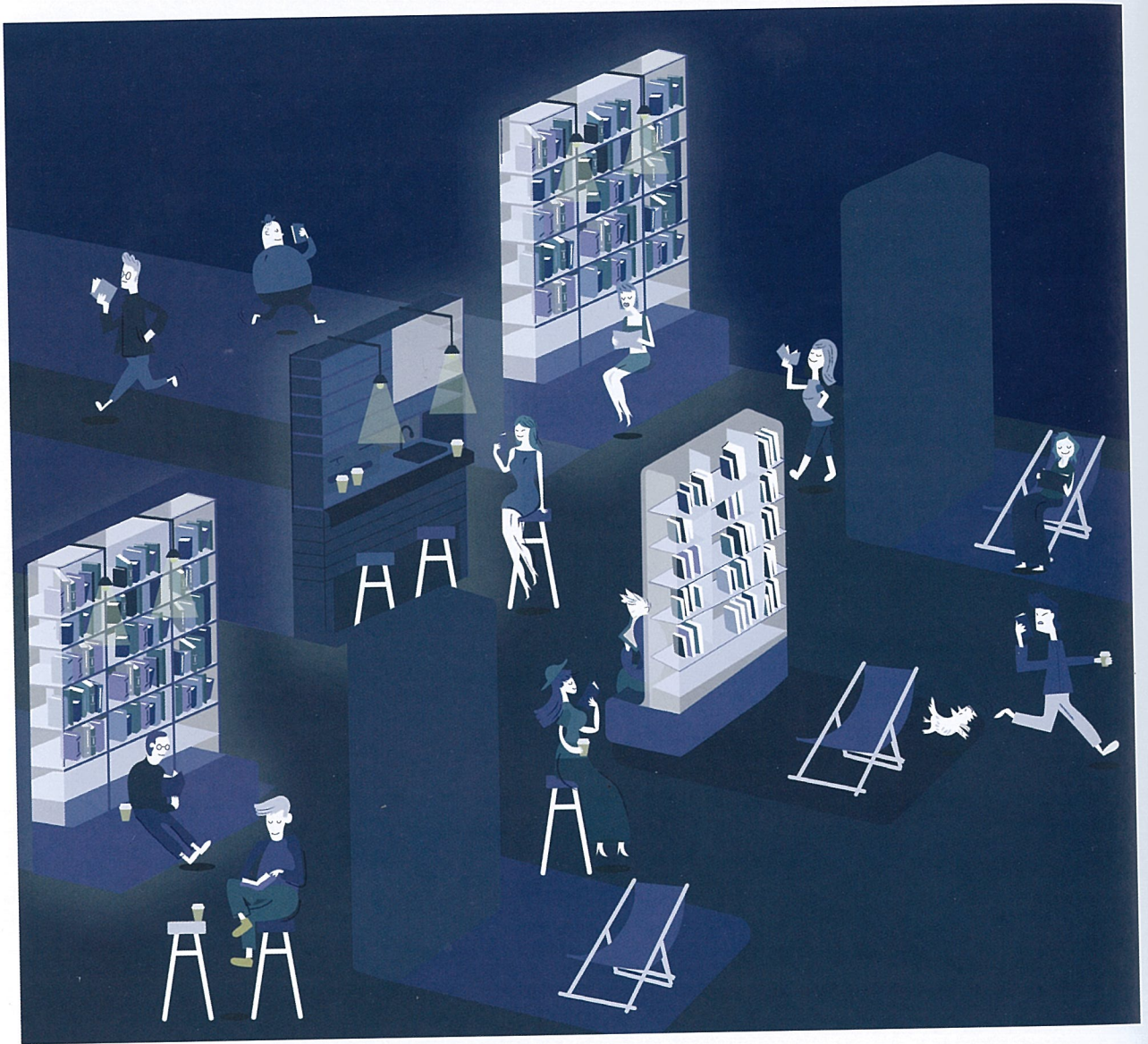
Membership equips the Store/Concierge with better knowledge of the clientele—ensuring a sharp and tailored edit of stock. Members connect to the Store's newsfeed online and book their in-store time by the hour. This ensures a set number of visitors at any time. The set-up is that of a private browsing library—intimacy is key. Fees can be fully redeemed for merchandise.

The focus is on architecture, design, craft and gastronomy—genres that relate to lifestyle improvement. An included section showcases eminent design blogs and DIY bloggers who scored book deals—further proof that digital and analog can be synchronized.

A modernist storefront folds open to reveal a double volume space, anchored by ascending stepped platforms made

for lounging (and storage). This leads up to the mezzanine level where a medley of reading tables are located. Floating bookshelves flank the full height of the walls, while the lower ledges hold new releases and bi-annual magazines. Coffee and refreshments on-demand alleviates browser fatigue—alternatively, the onsite café is just out the back, for a quick change of scenery.





MID SUMMER'S NIGHT BOOK CAFE

Studio: Dear Design Studio

Designer: Terence Yeung



Every day at 10pm, it opens. From that hour, as the quiet starts filtering in alongside the moonlight, it operates until 2am when all is dead and still. Mid Summer's Night is a bookstall, a cafe and installation—it emerges when the world is at peace, allowing its users a space out in the open, free of the hustle and bustle of everyday life. During the day, it remains shut, a solid sculptural installation. But come nightfall, it unfolds automatically into two units and transforms into a book cafe in the middle of any public square. The cafe sets a fixed time for the mind to rejuvenate and reconnect with the soul, free from busy schedules. Within the space of literature, readers can lose themselves and escape, just for a little while.

The future of the book store will rely on the critical economy of slim operation. By allowing the book store to become modular and mobile, allowing it to exist, rent-free and space-free, bookstores can exist anywhere, and anytime, to serve small communities or large populations. The bookstore literally becomes an event, with a fixed date and time. By crafting a special experience through the Mid Summer's Night Book Cafe, we

hope that the act of reading and the presence of the bookstore will start to become precious and meaningful again.

While you have a good read, enjoy some coffee and jazz from this playlist curated by Zechariah Goh:

1. Round Mid night—Monk
2. Black Coffee—Sonny Burke
3. Embraceable You—Gershwin
4. Autumn Leaves—Joseph Kosma
5. It Don't Mean a Thing—Duke Ellington
6. La Vie en Rose—Marguerite Monnot
7. My Funny Valentine—Miles Davis
8. Mood Indigo—Duke Ellington
9. Speak Low—Kurt Weill
10. Tea for Two—Vincent Youmans
11. Someone to Watch over Me—Gershwin
12. Misty—Johnny Burke