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# post magazine



## The tempest

After a turbulent time in Hollywood the ever-passionate Penelope Cruz has stormed back into form

Diamond deals

| Bhopal: 25 years of suffering

| Telluride's Gay Ski Week

| Chocolate cake indulgence



# Making light work

Judicious use of neon and basic materials transformed a handbag designer's NoHo studio into a stylish work space and gallery.

Finding a like-minded designer is often not easy but handbag designer Piecco Pang was lucky. Having bonded with Candace Campos, the driving force behind design house Candace Collective, during a yoga-teacher-training course, Pang gave her free reign over his newly rented 600 sq ft studio in NoHo.

"Piecco wanted a showroom, work-studio and crash-pad," says Campos. "Being a rental, we couldn't do anything structural and we didn't know how it was going to evolve: there's a possibility it may turn into a proper shop, carrying other lines, for example. So, we kept it simple and open-ended," she says.

Both designers make full-scale paper mock-ups of their creations: Pang painstakingly cuts out replicas of his handbag prototypes to check dimensions against a

client's body; Campos prefers to map out entire rooms in paper.

"That's all I did for about six weeks: put masking tape everywhere, figuring out the right sizes for things, the gaps between them, seeing whether there was enough space to move around in and so on. I always do that so things aren't so much of a surprise when you do it for real," she says.

Much of the furniture was conceived in a similar way: a distinctive retro-style coffee table started off as a palm-sized drawing by Campos, scaled upwards on paper by a stationer to the desired proportion and later used as a stencil by the glass contractor.

Pang is a self-confessed "Francophile" and his design style is strongly influenced by Paris, which he visits

frequently. Half French herself, Campos was able to tap into the chic continental vibe with artwork depicting French scenes and other *petits trucs*, including a clock set to Paris time.

Characterful lighting plays an important part, too. Wide-based pendant lamps and pink neon tubes infuse the entire space with retro glamour.

"I'm a big fan of neon," says Campos. "And I wanted to bring the colour pink in somehow because it's one of Piecco's brand colours. I do like interesting lighting – it's a very inexpensive way of creating a better mood."

Angular patterned wallpaper and sharply defined furnishings give the studio its modern finish. Frameless artwork and a bare mirror are placed alongside furnishings made of unadorned wood and glass. The cus- >>

**1** In the studio area, large black-and-white photographs by Illinois-based Cari Ann Wayman ([yellowbird.blogspot.com](http://yellowbird.blogspot.com); represented in Hong Kong by Candace Collective, 1/F, 171 Hollywood Road, Central, tel: 6706 7921, [www.candacecollective.com](http://www.candacecollective.com)) are clad in perspex frames, sourced by TOT5 (5 Tai On Terrace, Sheung Wan, tel: 2899 0729) for HK\$1,250 each. The glass for the shelves cost HK\$1,150 and the frameless mirror cost HK\$400 at King Cheung Mirror and Glass Engineering (6 Tai Wo Street, Wan Chai, tel: 2808 0838). The black floor lamps came from Fu Lee Electronics (212 Ap Liu Street, Sham Shui Po, tel: 2386 7838) and cost HK\$150 for the short and HK\$300 for the tall versions.

**2** A row of pink neon tubes (HK\$30 each from a street stall in Sham Shui Po) changes the atmosphere at night. The tubes are easy to change, offering a range of colour choices. The white Eames-style chair cost HK\$800 from Coco Furniture ([www.cocofurniture.com](http://www.cocofurniture.com)).

**3** A square white fireplace, sourced from Direct Designs International (13 Western Street, Sheung Wan, tel: 2522 0880) for HK\$14,900 provides a sleek focal point at one end of the studio. The portrait above is by Los Angeles artist Mike Stilkey ([www.mikestilkey.com](http://www.mikestilkey.com)) and the three smaller pen drawings are by Hong Kong illustrator Elsie Wong ([www.flickr.com/photos/elsiewong/sets](http://www.flickr.com/photos/elsiewong/sets)).



tom-made wood furnishings suited Pang's tight budget (see *Tried + tested*) and the existing wood floor. But, asserts Campos, budget did not dictate the overall look of the project.

"That's just my style. I like simple frameless things. Given the choice, I'd spend money on good flooring, textured walls – I love brick or wood panelling – and interesting lighting. If you have that, you really don't need much in furnishings. This is why I like turning industrial spaces into homes," she says.

Another consideration was fung shui, which was responsible for the studio's unusual fireplace.

"There was one corner that had to have something moving in it, something that operates – like a machine," says Pang. "The fung shui guy suggested installing a fax or a phone and then Candace said, 'What about a fireplace to make the place feel more homelike?' I love it. We don't actually use it much because it's usually quite warm in here but who cares? It looks cool."

Pang was in Paris during the redecoration period, barely arriving back in time for the unveiling.

"When I saw it, I was just shocked," he says. "It was at night, all the lights were on and the place looked absolutely fantastic. Somehow, Candace managed to do exactly what I would like to have done myself – only so much better."



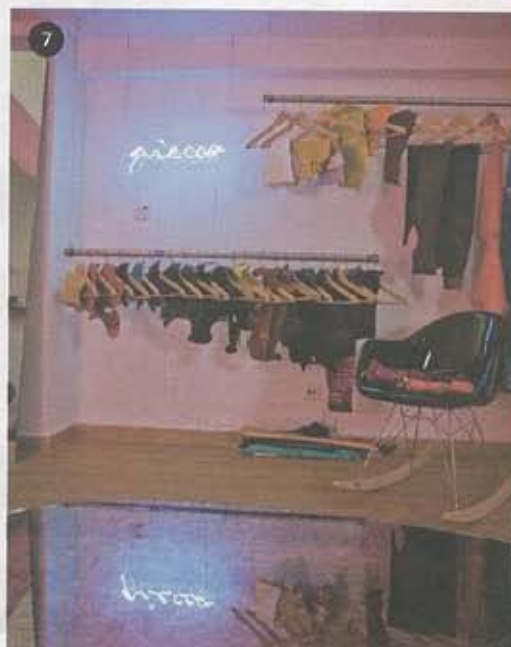
4 The kitchen, installed by the landlord, is simply furnished in neutral colours. The spider photograph was a gift from a friend.

5 The bathroom, also installed by the landlord, is practical, masculine and relatively unadorned.



6 The retro orange-peel sofa cost HK\$12,000 from Artura-Ficus (20 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, tel: 2527 2893) and is complemented by a white Saarinen-style side table (HK\$650 from Coco Furniture) and a similarly inspired coffee table. The tinted glass top, HK\$800 from King Cheung Mirror and Glass, was fixed to a steel base made by Kinetic Hardware (tel: 2575 7721) for HK\$2,500. The wide pendant lamp is one of many bought for HK\$350 to HK\$500 each from United States furnishings store Roost (www.roostco.com).

7 Adding an industrial edge are second-hand steel tubes, bought for HK\$20 a foot from Wing Lee Hardware (154 Wellington Street, Central, tel: 2544 4377) and installed as clothing rails by main contractor Johnny Lam of Global Century (Flat 3, 5/F, Wing Fung Industrial Building, 40 Sha Tsui Road, Tsuen Wan, tel: 2499 1221; johnnyfslam@yahoo.com). The neon "Piecco" sign was made by Wah Sang Advertising Decoration & Engineering (G/F, Fleming Building, 35 Fleming Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2836 5016) for HK\$2,400 and the black Eames-style rocker was ordered online from Coco Furniture for HK\$800.



## Tried + tested



**Log jam** If finding stylish furniture on a budget proves difficult, go back to basics. Designer Candace Campos bought a log of untreated wood and teamed up with woodworkers at Poly Chance (271 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2802 9819) to create a large table, two stools and nine shelves, all beautifully grained and weathered, for a total of HK\$14,000, including labour.