

60 SECONDS WITH: PHILIPPE STARCK

Motorcycles, music and the uselessness of design

W-979-14

Though perhaps lacking the cachet of his redos of boutique hotels (The Royalton, Delano, Hudson, Paramount) or collectible status of his spider-esque juicer for Alessi (or \$300 million yacht built for Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko), Philippe Starck's latest creation, the SensoWash Starck "shower-toilet" (aka bidet-toilet) for Duravit, exhibits the designer's trademark ability to make everyday objects—from toothbrushes and trains to watches and chairs—exponentially sleeker and chic-er. Here, the irrepressible Frenchman discusses his motorcycle habit and quails about his profession.

Design is absolutely useless. There are two types of jobs: the job that saves life and the job that does not save life. I do not save life with design.

My advice to students is "don't try to make design." It's so fashionable now for students—there are now

more designers than there are forks per person.

My preferred mode of transport is motorcycle. I have 35 motorcycles. I drive the motorcycle that I designed and also ones I have designed especially for me. I cannot have a car—it's heavy, it consumes too much, it's a stupid symbol of machismo. I have a very good plane—which I designed—where I can put my motorcycle and when I arrive somewhere I take the motorcycle and go to the meeting and then go back to the plane.

My favorite cheap thing is music. I listen to everything that's good. There is the same quantity of bull in classical music as there is in popular street music. There is a sound designer, the best in the world, called Stephan Crasneanski (soundwalk.com). He made me a Starck mbx, which I listen to all the time.

I do my clothes myself. I buy some fabric and send it to Agnès B, who

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Philippe Starck, the Starck loo and Starck motorcycle, and 'Never Let me Go.'

has my patterns, and in 24 hours I have pants, a jacket and a hat.

My favorite hotel is La Coomiche. Near my oyster farm there is the biggest sand dune in Europe called the Dune du Pyia and on this dune last year I built a small cabana with

12 rooms and a big kitchen. It's facing the sea and the sunset. It's astonishing.

What do I love about the new Duravit SensoWash toilet? A product like that is really honest—a toilet that washes and dries. It's a real, humble service.

I read Japanese literature. Kazuo Ishiguro. I love him. You have to read "Never Let Me Go."

I don't have a favorite architect. I'm not into all that. I know nothing about design or architecture. My daughter says I am a modern autistic. I live alone, I work alone, I don't watch TV or go to cinema or read magazines—I have simply no idea of what is happening in the world.

I don't buy art any more because today art is too cynical, too much business and I shall buy art when art will come back to its duty of politics and honesty and real creativity and not marketing.

On my tombstone I want it to say, "He was honest. He was foolish, he was crazy—no, he was honest." No, no, no. Seriously, just, "He is somewhere else."

—Edited from an interview by Deb Schwartz