

**PHILIPPE STARCK BIOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN WINGFIELD
JANUARY 2010**

“**Subversive, ethical, ecological, political, humorous...** this is how I see my duty as a designer.” Philippe Starck

The thousands of projects - complete or forthcoming - his global fame and tireless protean inventiveness should never distract from Philippe Starck's fundamental **vision**: Creation, whatever form it takes, must improve the lives of as many people as possible. Starck vehemently believes this **poetic** and **political** duty, **rebellious** and **benevolent, pragmatic** and **subversive**, should be shared by everyone and he sums it up with the humour that has set him apart from the very beginning: “No one has to be a genius, but everyone has to participate.”

His precocious awareness of **ecological implications**, his enthusiasm for imagining new lifestyles, his determination to change the world, his love of ideas, his concern with defending the **intelligence of usefulness** – and the usefulness of intelligence – has taken him from iconic creation to iconic creation... From the everyday products, furniture and lemon squeezers, to revolutionary mega yachts, hotels that stimulate the senses, phantasmagorical venues and individual wind turbines, he never stops pushing the limits and criteria of contemporary design. His dreams are solutions, solutions so vital that he was the first French man to be invited to the **TED conferences** (Technology, Entertainment & Design) alongside renowned participants including Bill Clinton and Richard Branson.

Inventor, creator, architect, designer, artistic director, Philippe Starck is certainly all of the above, but more than anything else he is an **honest man** directly descended from the Renaissance artists.

A CHILDHOOD OF ART

“My father was an aeronautical engineer. For me it was a duty to **invent**”. Philippe Starck

Philippe Starck was born in 1949. From his childhood spent beneath the drawing tables of his airplane building, aeronautic engineer father, he retains a primary lesson: everything should be organised elegantly and rigorously, in human relationships as much as in the concluding vision that presides over every creative gesture. His absolute belief that creation should be used and enjoyed by all sees him relentlessly endeavouring to do well, right down to the tiniest detail.

But years later has he really left his first improvised office? According to him, not completely. “Ultimately they were children’s games, imagination games, but thanks to various skills, especially engineering, something happened. I’m a kid who dreams and at the same time I’ve got that light-heartedness and gravity of children. I fully accept the **rebellion**, the **subversion** and the **humour**.”

Starck first showed interest in living spaces while he was a student at the Ecole Nissim de Camondo in Paris, where in 1969 he designed an inflatable house, based on an idea on materiality. This revelation bought his first success at the Salon de l’Enfance. Not long afterwards, Pierre Cardin, seduced by the iconoclastic design, offered him the job of artistic director at his publishing house.

In 1976 and a few emblematic objects later, including a flying lamp and a portable neon sign, this intrepid dreamer created the audacious decor of the night club, **La Main Bleue** - in Montreuil – demonstrating that no venue is less respectable than another just because of its eccentricity. He went on to do the legendary Parisian nightclub **Les Bains Douches** and the Starck Club in Dallas.

At the same time he founded his first industrial design company, Starck Product, which he later renamed **Ubik** after the famous Philip K. Dick novel. Here he initiated his collaborations with the biggest design manufacturers in Italy - **Driade, Alessi, Kartell** - and the world – **Drimmer** in Austria, **Vitra** in Switzerland Swiss and **Disform** in Spain, among so many others.

In 1983 the general public discovered Philippe Starck when, on the advice of Culture Minister Jack Lang, President François Mitterrand chose his project to decorate **the private residence at the Elysée Palace**. It symbolised an institutional recognition of design. The following year his fame went global thanks to the success of the **Café Costes**, a new venue that was functional and elegant, that contained all the essence of Starck architecture while converging with the birth and the flourishing of a community. His reinvention of the codes of the Parisian cafe made it THE cafe par excellence.

LIFE SPACES ARCHITECTURE

“If there is no vision, humane, social or loving, a project doesn’t have the legitimacy to exist.”
Philippe Starck

Although he considers himself no more an architect than designer, in 1989 Philippe Starck started devising buildings in Japan, each with completely new forms. The first was in Tokyo and was striking in its originality. **Nani Nani** was an impressive anthropomorphic building covered with a living material that evolved with time. The structure was born from the powerful conviction that creation must invest in an environment without destabilising it while maintaining the greatest respect for its context. Like all of his work Starck’s architecture is virulently and explicitly humanist.

A year later he confirmed his status as leader of avant-gardist architecture with the **Asahi Beer Hall** in Tokyo and then an ensemble of offices in Osaka, known as the **Baron Vert**, in 1992. A pioneer of impressionist reasoning bursting with relentless enthusiasm, he made buildings that even when dedicated to work reclaimed life. In France he was commissioned to design **the control tower at Bordeaux’s airport** (1997) and **the extension of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs** in Paris (1998). **Jean Paul Gaultier** entrusted his imagination to transcend into his showrooms in London and New York and in 2002 Philippe Stark designed Gaultier’s boutique in Paris. Through the years this architectural vision has re-occurred quite naturally in his numerous restaurant and hotel interior projects.

RESTAURANTS

They may be different each time, but every one of Philippe Starck’s scenarios establishes firm connections with those who generate the soul of a venue, while taking an intimate approach articulated around subversion, sensuality, creativity and poetry.

Like a euphoric, optimistic director he treats every living space as if it were a theatre where a story unravels, creating a sort of drama sprinkled with surreal acts. The **Teatron** restaurant in Mexico (1985) and then the **Teatriz** in Madrid (1988) installed in an old theatre are the most obvious examples of this phenomenon. In 1988 he overhauled the old Parisian theatre hall, **La Cigale**, which continues to be a favourite among musicians for its unparalleled acoustics. Whatever the project, Starck enjoys highlighting its singular pulse, its special vibration, to create a venue in harmony with its environment while lighting its romantic flame. For the **Felix** restaurant in Hong Kong (1994) he created a crazy, poetic theatre, contrasting with the ultra-materialistic reality of the city it resides above. Added to poetry is ironic and political contradiction, like a subversive call to order: life cannot be resumed by matter or materiality. Through the emotions and reactions that a space provokes, the visitor becomes an actor in a story that takes him out of himself towards a dream and beyond showing him that another life

is possible. “My only task is to show the path,” he underlines, “The only important thing to me is the effect my creations have on their users, on my cultural tribe.” As a good iconoclast Starck stamps his vision with theatricality, ensuring the show has a message that everyone can read, namely putting the importance of links back into the heart of the city, so communities prevail over the dispersion of individuals.

Romantic, audacious and luxurious, the Palais de Cristal de la **Maison Baccarat** (2004), in a Parisian town house that once belonged to Marie-Laure de Noailles, blazes under its own impulsion. Adjacent to the museum and boutique is the restaurant, **the Cristal Room Baccarat**, which immediately imposed itself as an incontrovertible venue for Parisian gastronomes, but also as a space that spectacularly links the festive Noailles years to our own era.

In love with this exceptional material, shaped by the hands of men and rich in sparkling facets - like so many romantic beacons - Starck has transcribed the implicit poetry of crystal and translated the joy carried by its diffractions in timeless spaces.

Four years later he took this vision to Moscow with the Maison Baccarat, Museum, Boutique and Restaurant, a world of illusions in which dreams, symbols and reality voluptuously come together...

Iconic venues have been springing up in the biggest cities across the planet. The restaurants **Bon I** (2000) and **Bon II** (2002), the **Mori Venice Bar** (2006) and the **Paradis du Fruit** (2009) in Paris while for the USA there was the important arrival of **Katsuya** in Los Angeles (2006), the first of a series of Japanese restaurants. The same year he unveiled a subversive, Manichean vision of the world with **the Bon restaurant in Moscow**. In Beijing he concocted a theatrical extravaganza for the 6 000 m² restaurant **Lan** (2007) where the abundance of objects and materials as well as the miscellanea of styles transport the diner on a surreal journey where, “the empty spaces are more important than the full spaces”. It’s the cheeky mocking of an era which boasts the merits of accumulation. There’s a Rabelais saying that Starck likes to quote: “Science with conscience is the ruin of the soul.” Through this intensely rebellious gesture, the concept of a labyrinthine restaurant where one readily wanders, he transforms the quote to, “Space without ideas is the ruin of man.” In the same spirit of modernity 2007 saw Shanghai welcome the **Volar Club**. Like a veritable party invitation this new stage became the epicentre of a burgeoning night life while underlining with explicitly festive creativity the importance of the tribal approach and the imperative necessity to create links.

HOTELS

1988 was a decisive year for the hotel world, nothing short of a flamboyant revolution. Along with Ian Schrager, Starck invented a new vision and a new set of codes for the hospitality business with the **Royalton** in New York, which put humans back into the heart of the designer’s work.

The experiment continued with the **Delano** in Miami (1995) and the **Mondrian** in Los Angeles, then **Saint Martin’s Lane** (1999) and the **Sanderson** (2000) in London.

Hotels are no longer impersonal transitional venues but living, pleasurable spaces bursting with humour and irony. They are theatres where we act out our own destinies. With the **Hudson** in New York (1999) he continued his dream-like quest, conjuring up an acid-tinted phantasmagoria with numerous dreamy and reflective surprises. In 2001 he designed the **Clift** in San Francisco and pushed the spectacle even further combining the city's classical codes and archetypes with cutting edge technology - undoubtedly a bit mischievously yet with the constant aim of keeping the creation in perspective with its context.

In 2005 the Hotel **Faena** in Buenos Aires - which had opened a year before - won the Wallpaper* magazine's prize for best hotel of the year and Condé Nast Traveller singled it out for its atmosphere and design. He took a dilapidated building and breathed new life into it, offering it a future without flouting its past. The ex-nihilist had created a cosmopolitan yet human hotel that opened out onto the world and was destined to encourage encounters and creative life to blossom.

In Rio de Janeiro, Philippe Starck designed the building for the Hotel **Fasano** which opened its doors in 2007. The materials – wood, glass, marble – and the furniture paid a discreet, humble and sincere tribute to the Brazilian designers of the 1950s and 1960s, who were so innovative in their approach to the environment.

Committed to his ethics yet aware that the hotelier business must reflect the movements and flux of the world and its ideas, this tireless nomad and fruitful designer reinterpreted the codes of the luxury hotel industry in Paris with vigour and fantasy when he added a dash of poetic and surreal folly to the oldest five star hotel in the French capital... the **Meurice**. With the same momentum, end of 2010 will see the re-opening of the five star Parisian hotel, the **Royal Monceau**, a symbol of luxurious elegance splendidly revived. "For me, the Royal Monceau was an opportunity to explore the nature of French identity and reinvent it without resorting to the simplistic or folkloric. With all its qualities and failings. And to rediscover its rebellious and subversive spirit that manages simultaneously to be very elegant, detached and noble. At the Royal Monceau, there is no possible doubt that you are indeed in Paris. It's a place that no one can describe, a mental space, inhabited, air in vibration." And there are many more new surprises to come...

Always a man of paradox, from the 1990s onwards Starck committed himself to another revolution, that of the democratisation of quality, designer hotels. First with the **Paramount** in New York which offered rooms for \$100 and which has since become a classic of the genre. In 2008 he applied this generous, humanist idea to Paris by designing the **Mama Shelter**. This hotel bears witness to the new social values of an open minded cultural tribe founded on rigour, honesty, humour, intelligence and sharing. On its origins, he explains, "There's a story of profound friendship. As soon as I met the Trigano, who initiated this project, I became part of the family. This very human adventure based the project on love. Together we wanted to bring a democratic dream to fruition... give the best to the most people possible using the newest ideas and the energy of the young."

Born from a philosophical and political desire this establishment, in its neglected urban yet vibrating landscape, accompanies the most inventive, most determined aspects of the future.

Just as Starck's dreams are destined to sow their fruitful seeds everywhere, those of the Mama Shelter will soon be taking root in Lyon, Bordeaux, Istanbul among other cities...

The **YOO** project, which began in London in 2001 with property tycoon John Hitchcox and continued until 2008 in Santa Fe, Mexico – before its inevitable expansion – is part of this desire to break down the conventions of luxury lodging by offering apartments with modern floor plans that correspond with the expectations of tribe members. This made-to-measure lifestyle, thanks to an offer from diverse cultural families that advocates freedom, flexibility and simplicity, is the perfect outcome of a life of research and vision. In 2009 YOO had 50 buildings in constructions across the world.

The noughties, like the 1980s, required a revolution in the hotel industry. With the SLS in Beverly Hills (2007) under the impetus of visionary entrepreneur Sam Nazarian, Starck signed his very first luxury hotel in North America. He wanted to give it heart, flesh and humanity by transforming the reception along with all its visual and sensory surprises into an experience where frontiers between design, art and daily life fade away. So the lobby at the **SLS** Hotel, the **Bazaar**, became a veritable life centre where a tapas restaurant and Norwegian health bar share space with a luxury patisserie counter and the mythical Moss concept store. “People know when to stop. There will always be something to discover, someone to meet, it’s like a permanent bubbling of energy. It’s a bit like the village square,” resumes Starck. It’s no real surprise that the fantastic culinary designer and extraordinary innovator, José Andrés, a pioneer of techno-emotional cooking, became involved in the adventure. Some twenty accolades have been awarded to the business, bestowed by Condé Nast Traveller, Wallpaper*, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times among others...

Further to the east, in the heart of Iberian peninsular is the **Alhondiga** in Bilbao, a cultural centre nearly 30,000 square metres large, whose opening will be the event of spring 2010. “This project contains the crystallisation of life,” explains the creator, “We have preserved the 1909 facade and the walls which are ten metres thick. And it is precisely within these walls that the story of the building will unfold. No other space in the world will offer as many activities under one roof. You can work, eat, drink, see an exhibition, do sport or read. I like this idea of communion, of intermingling activities, all while remaining quite practical. It will encourage even more surprising magical moments because it is still a totally unheard of experience. Passers-by will be able to watch everything through the windows. I’m busy bringing life into our sights.”

May 2010 will be a key date in the world of sea adventurers as this great boat lover completes work on the development of **Port Adriano** in Majorca. There Philippe Stark will be offering a new urbanism designed to welcome boats up to 60 metres long, while utterly respecting environmental norms.

For Philippe Starck telling a story is an integral part of the creative process: the meaning nourishes the form. His attachment to public places pleads his case for the setting up of a humane community determined to strive for change. “I’m carried along by a major theme... the adventure of our human species, essentially governed by intelligence.” It is time to remind ourselves that living well together is also living intelligently.

DESIGN, A POETIC AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

“Every object, every shape, every style must have a meaning, and it is this meaning that influences us every day.” Philippe Starck

What is humanity lacking? Certainly not more objects... Because he is acutely aware of this and because he places the individual at the centre of his work, Philippe Starck enjoys telling us that the pencil is his only tool – weapon even – that he has for changing the world.

Everyone, as far as Starck is concerned, deserves the best, and there lies the **generosity** and **aspiration** to satisfy a community sharing these values. He remembers having fought “to improve **quality**, reduce prices and be **available to all**. No one wanted me to, but every time I lowered the price, I also improved the quality and the product sold better. So manufacturers were forced to follow me... I never stopped campaigning to see perfect products emerge, quality products made to last.” As a pioneer whose spontaneity addresses everybody, Starck has never let his success obstruct his benevolence.

Unlike prevailing conventions, when Philippe Starck began his career his designs were never destined solely for an elite but for the whole of society. He dreamt of design **democratisation**, in other words an optimal quality for a minimal price and diffusion to the largest audience possible.

He believes that sincere, modern elegance comes from the **multiplication** of an object, as opposed to the ideology of limited editions, where premeditation on rarity leads to a selection through money rather than necessity. Starck has successfully dedicated his life to the fight for imposing a design concept that goes beyond elitism.

An approach aimed to give the best to the maximum of people and indeed why should it be reserved for a small privileged group? On this basis he has worked with the **3 Suisses** catalogue since 1984 when he invented a line of furniture and where he later offered, from 1994, the historic “Maison de Starck”, an individual mail order house made from wood. In 2002 for the American supermarket chain, **Target**, he designed some sixty ultra creative objects, from a glass to a baby’s bottle. Affordable pieces created to modestly light up the daily lives of American housewives, even in the heart of Minneapolis.

As a protean designer, Philippe Starck re-thinks the most ordinary objects from our daily lives and the most astonishing, always to the point of drastic reinvention. He rebels against acquired laziness in order to serve us as well as possible while delivering his messages of **humanity, love** and **poetry**. His designs focus more on functionality than the object itself, aiming to provide the best possible service using a minimum of material. From this economy comes the elegance of a minimal line – almost a philosophy – and spreading curves that lean towards the disappearance of objects.

So Philippe Starck developed plastic furniture, the pinnacle of which is undoubtedly the iconic **Louis Ghost** chair (Kartell, 2002) a veritable treaty of modernity with an inevitable dematerialisation. Since its launch no less than a million examples have been sold. Some of the numerous daily objects revisited with his mischievous approach have become the most

emblematic examples of design today. He also created elements for the bathroom (for **Duravit, Hansgrohe, Hoesch, Axor**, 1994), a toothbrush (**Fluocaril**, 1989), the **Zikmu** speakers without cables (Parrot, 2009, awarded the global Bluetooth SIG "Best of CES" Prize, Las Vegas 2009), a whole range of items for babies (**Maclaren**, 2004), the **RT201**, a radio alarm clock (**Thompson**, 1999) and the Optical Mouse by Starck (**Microsoft**, 2004). By creating objects that are good, human and intelligent before being beautiful, Philippe Starck is present in our daily lives. His creations make our lives, they are life themselves with the most anodyne discovering a hidden allure when they reveal their secret poetry. So the toothbrush metamorphoses into an amicable reference point in the heart of the bathroom, an encouraging wink, as well as being rigorously functional... Every object created is a letter the designer wishes to send us.

In 2007 Starck designed the line **Privé** for **Cassina**, with its two levels of understanding and whose vocation he resumes as, "Furniture that through its mobility, versatility and adaptability allows us to rediscover a slightly forgotten agility. It seemed coherent to me with our future lovers and new visions. "Prive" invents a new imaginative territory. FOR LOVE. TO LOVE! Indeed both practical and lascivious, adhering to innuendo with the ironic provocation that identifies its creator, Privé offers a line of armchairs and sofas that perfectly marry the contours of life, between night and day.

But the relentless concern to deliver a political message doesn't stop him from bringing spectacular enterprises to fruition with humour. From the poetic folly such as the subversive **Gun Lamp** (**Flos**, 2005), a giant architecture lamp, the **Superarchimoon** (**Flos**, 2000), 214cm high to the **Haaa!!!** and **Hooo!!!** lights created with the artist Jenny Holzer (**Flos/Baccarat**, 2009) or the monumental chandeliers from the **Darkside** collection, including the emblematic **Zenith** (**Baccarat**, 2005).

Of the emblematic Gun Lamp, Starck described it as "a sign of the times", highlighting a sad fact that "Gold on guns reminds us of the collusion between money and war". By fiercely registering death in our daily landscape, he reminds us as much of our mortal condition as our passiveness before the crimes that surround us. A percentage of the price paid for this rare object is donated to the charity "Freres des Hommes.

As for the creation of Hooo !!! and Haaa !!!, these poetic manifestations were born from a desire shared by Flos, Jenny Holzer and Starck to "Assemble things that ordinarily shouldn't be assemble-able to create a tension that creates new propositions. They resolve a paradox: on one side we have a sophisticated and archaic material and on the other the electronic technology that gives a voice to the poetry behind the crystal: that of mathematics, of human mutation and of Jenny Holzer. We wanted to touch people whose capacity for wonderment is still in tact and whose inclination to dream remains strong."

A designer in love with heightened senses and dreamlike vitality, Starck doesn't look down on the poetry of prosaism. Keen on nourishing the body as well as the soul, he perfected an innovative tubular structure that guarantees the **Pasta Panzani** will be cooked to al dente faultlessness every time (1996).

Carried by a generous, humanist enthusiasm and long before it was fashionable to eat well, in 1998 he established **OAO** - a food company that facilitated access to organic products - continuing the democratisation of design that he had begun in the 1980s with the ceaseless desire to improve the lot of everyone. From reading glasses to watches and clothes, he always

wanted to intervene directly on the human body, to flatter it, to encourage it, to assist it and it's no less vital to offer the best fuel to allow the brain to function optimally so that intelligence flourishes and love fertilises, "One of the absolute finalities of our lives on earth."

In 2005 the launch of **La Amarilla** signified a new turning point: it was the first organic olive oil to be assembled by an oenologist. Starck's priority is to give the best to everyone without exception.

The daily prosaism makes peace with the humour and the romanticism it keeps hidden. It is as much a gauge of the serene present as a radiant future.

S+ARCK® BRANDS

With his sensitivity to the multiple dimensions of existence it was inevitable that he would get involved with clothes at some point. For **Puma** he designed intelligent shoes (2004) and in 2006 for his **Starck Naked** brand he created underwear that was both technological and sexy. In spring 2009 **Ballantyne** invited him to design a collection of clothes for men and women in cashmere. He ignored trends and his approach, modern and yet timeless, expresses a new form of sensuality. Praised for its longevity and subsequent humility, the collection he designed for this company - established in 1921 and very conscious of innovation - makes the transition from a traditional brand to a prestigious, modern one. "I was moved by the ancestral savoir-faire at Ballantyne," admits Starck, "Its vast expertise in the realm of cashmere and the pride taken in its Scottish roots. This line corresponds to what we really need, anytime, anywhere, using the highest natural technology of cashmere to explore new territories of the eternal elegance of intelligence."

With **Starck Eyes (Mikli, 1996)**, he created revolutionary, ergonomic, "bionic" reading glasses inspired by the joints of the human body. "They correspond best with what I call the non-product of tomorrow; ethical, reflecting intelligence and elegance." But above all, he emphasises, glasses are neither a fashion accessory nor a mere frill, they fulfil an obligatory function. "In a world where we are suffocated by useless products whose only goal is to be sold, they belong in the fundamental sphere of everything designed and built for human advantage. With glasses I could talk about the essence of our very existence." As Starck has always insisted, existence requires intelligence and a prime example of this is the pivotal **Biolink**, "Inspired by the human clavicle, it opens the door to bionism. In this case because its functioning is analogical to that of our bodies, the glasses suit the physiology of everyone better. Their movements are harmonious, they constitute an extension of the individual, and they disappear from our field of perception to blend into us."

This same technology was employed with the creation of the watches, **Starck Watch with Fossil**, to be as close to the skin as possible, anticipating the possible integration of objects into the human body, ultimately conserving only their raison d'être... the service they provide us with, free of ostentation and reducing the object to a bare minimum.

By 1992 this visionary had created a non-object, a simple continuation of the forearm for the **torch** that carried the great values of Olympus at the Albertville Games that same year. "The

products made by our civilisation are like the stars," he explains, "A star that we can see is in the process of imploding, its volume reduces and its mass increases. The product of tomorrow will be a product whose volume reduces while its competence and power mass increase. Dematerialisation is our functioning by essence."

The four kitchens **S+arck by Warendorf** created for **Miele Kuchen** (2009), to celebrate the changing of its name to Warendorf redefined a new urbanism for our daily lives by offering integral models with book shelves and multifunctional rotating units as well as a hybrid space that combines a living room, dining room and kitchen. A whole new energy centre for the home.

Backed by strong ethical values, his design is meant to be in harmony, if not in absolute symbiosis, with its context, whether it is human or topographical. When he designs modular, multifunctional urban furnishings (for **JC Decaux**), Philippe Starck works as a veritable semiologist.

As an all encompassing brand, S+ARCK offers his vision to whoever is looking for it and provides gauges of understanding to his work ethics. Starck is more interested in accompanying a tribal brother than having partnerships.

MOBILITY, AN ENGINEER'S GAME AND A CITIZEN'S DUTY

In his hands (because he himself is a happy and experienced motorcyclist) motorbikes such as the **6,5 (Aprilia, 1995)** and the **X3 (Aprilia, 2000)** or even the **Super Naked Xv (Voxan, 2007)** integrate better into their environments, becoming objects of leisure and freedom, free of machismo yet loaded with panache, far from consumer vanity. For the Super Naked Xv, Voxan by Starck, created in partnership with Voxan - the most exclusive French bike brand - the radical purity of the minimum serves the raw power, touching the absolute essence of the motorbike. Judge for yourself: 1200 cm³, 140 horse power, 180kg. A raw engine refined by a line dreaming of evidence.

The marine environment is another source of inspiration. Starck loves the sea, boats and has a profound, natural knowledge of the ocean, defining himself as an amphibian, "webbed feet and a back covered in scales". He collaborated with **Bénéteau** for the sailing boat **First** (1988) where he reinterpreted the timeless codes of the sea, then he went on to create le **Virtuelle** (1997), a racing boat with minimalist forms and in perfect harmony with the sea. His collaboration with **Hobie Cat** (2009) came out of a longing that was very personal, "I was given the honour and joy to possess and port every model of the Hobie Cat. This addiction was a religion. The religion of minimalism." Fun, elementary and destined for all, his re-writing of this mythical boat brings together the democratic vocation he gives all of his products and his dream of mobility, in every possible way.

He has recently created two mega-yachts. The **Wedge II** (2002), innovative in its purified appearance contrasting with the conventions (and did he have fun) of this type of boat and whose elegance was rewarded the prize of best boat of the year. Then in 2008 he designed the **"A"**, a vessel that was revolutionary in its philosophy as much as its internal and external technology. While measuring 120 metres it claims the values of discretion, ecology, drawing

on a sincere love for the sea. The unusual shape, explicitly inspired by fish, means it makes no waves up to 25 knots. The hull's surface has a sheen that integrates it into the marine universe as if it were quite at home in its natural element. The revolutionary hull with its inverted bow wave was drawn in a purely intuitive manner by Starck, as if he was guided by a dual heritage; that of his own vision and that transmitted by his engineer father. Starck was awarded two major prizes for this revolutionary project: "Most Innovative Yacht in Yachts France" at the Maritime Show in Cannes in 2009, and "The Most Innovative Exterior Yacht Design of the Year 2008" at the Asia Boating Awards Ceremony in 2008.

He demonstrates that no matter the size or the vocation, the honest object – and the approach of an honest man, as evoked earlier – suggests how things can be done better, more efficiently, more usefully and more respectfully, all while using minimum material.

And what a beautiful symbol to have designed the first class waiting rooms in London and Paris for **Eurostar**, the magical train that not only links an island to a continent, but also encourages the circulation of ideas and imaginations.

From 2006 to 2007, Starck had the opportunity to go back to his early years and his childhood drawings as the artistic director for **Virgin Galactic** responsible for the democratisation of space tourism. As poetic as this inclination appears, it is deemed essential in the eyes of this man who wholeheartedly believes the words of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, "The world began without man and will end without him." One day we will have to leave for another world. It is unthinkable that the research to enable man to accomplish this destiny should not be democratic.

Philippe Starck offers a manifesto for an ethical design that he has always rigorously kept to; "It is founded on honesty, respect, vision, creativity, humour and love." By applying it to his work he has revolutionised the world of design, shattered old habits and reshuffled the cards of an elitist milieu. In short he has defined design as something to improve all of our lives.

CREATION SERVING TECHNOLOGY

We all know that there comes an age when paternal heritage has to be accepted and injected in our destiny. Philippe Starck never rejected his, but today it is resurfacing with exceptional vigour. Engineering was integrated early on in his projects, in fact was more of a motor than a practical condition.

From 1993 to 1996 Starck, as creative director of the **Thomson** group created, among other items, loudspeakers, televisions, including the portable **Zéo Tv** (1994), the voice responsive telephone, the **Aloo** (1995), the **LCD Cube** overhead projector (1996) and the radio **Lalala** (1996). "From technology to love", he proclaimed and indeed his creations for the French brand set themselves apart with their fun side, their proximity to the user and their technical efficiency.

Before devoting himself to the **Zikmu** cable-less speakers (**Parrot**, 2009), he had noticed that sound was nothing more than a vibration in the air. Equipped with this observation he strived to achieve, "A scent of air that echoes in us to open other world to us. The beauty, the

fragility and the power of this abstraction cannot be polluted by matter,” he assures us, “This is why we have worked so hard to make the minimum. To protect the spirit of sound, help its essence blossom. The existence of a speaker is like a sign of intelligence. The intelligence to know that the least can contain the most.” The material is forgotten altogether by the service rendered by the culmination of one of Starck’s dreams, “The minimum of material for optimum usage,” he resumes, “It’s a purely functional design dedicated to the height of technology.”

This conception of high technology is shared by Henri Seydoux, founder of Parrot. “He has real vision,” adds Starck, “He thinks about getting people to communicate with greater flexibility and through infinite possibilities.”

Being at the cutting edge of technology isn’t an end unto itself; it simply ensures being in agreement with the future that we hope accompanies it.

For **La Cie**, Starck designed two external hard drives, the LaCie **Starck Desktop Hard Drive** and the **Starck Mobile Hard Drive** (LaCie, 2009). The first is equipped with a tactile surface that responds to touch and permits the user to choose an application with only the slightest touch. The research into optimal technology aims to satisfy our real needs, not create new superfluous or artificial ones. Reaching for sustainability to establish a durable relationship between Man, production and the object is the first step in a commitment to the protection of our environment.

By putting humans at the heart of progress, Starck demonstrates once again his greater interest in living things than prowess

THE FIGHT FOR ECOLOGY

“Existing means serving your tribe. Barbarity must be overcome. **Ecology** is the absolute urgency.” Philippe Starck.

Long before environmental concerns became widespread (even though the **urgency** is greater than ever, it is still just commercial strategy for the cynical latecomers) Starck had understood in his farsighted wisdom that the subject would be at the heart of our present and essential to our future. His desire to develop **durable creations** in a responsible, ethical manner that is useful, fulfil their essential function and exist far from any notion of perishable fashion, has been intrinsic to his career since the beginning

A **visionary and enthusiastic citizen**, Philippe Starck is committed to the future of mankind through projects that will help his contemporaries live in harmony with their natural surroundings, all while being a part of “the big picture”. He aims to go beyond survival by offering future generations the possibility of writing their future on a fresh page, so that they can invent their own story.

This is the vision: to change the perspective of his creative actions to go further and to share them with the greatest number of people. “Increasingly aware, we can all take the destiny of the human species in hand instead of drifting into the mechanisms of a mercenary market.” It consists of giving up the insane cycle of fashion for sustainable, durable objects.

A pioneer in the commitment to responsible development, Philippe Starck created **Good Goods** in 1998, a catalogue of “non-products for the non-consumers of the future moral market,” sold by mail order (**La Redoute**). He proved that another version of consumption was possible, drawing attention to all the contemporary problems and providing solutions with products, non products, useless products, creation ethics, the production and the ethics of commerce. The catalogue offered products in organic cotton and Ecover detergents, solvent-free paints, and cosmetics without dyes, perfumes or chemical products. “My responsibility today is more about being interested in the future production of energy and in the future materials that will replace plastic, petrol’s most interesting derivative.”

The line of food products **OAO** (1998) and the **LA Amarilla** oil (2005) have been two of the most concrete examples of this very human and very generous consciousness of responsibility.

Well aware of the urgency to develop democratic ecology, his civic combat has become even more radical today. It’s a personal commitment, but also a firm invitation to join him. In 2008 he invented an individual wind turbine for the Italian group, **Pramac**, which is attractive and invisible, easily accessible and usable at an affordable price. It also responds to the new criteria of mobility imposed by our nomadic destiny. Beyond its technical characteristics, it completely changes our approach to consuming and generating energy.

After his interest in democratic design beyond fashion, the necessity to rethink our means of transport and to redefine means of energy production, it was quite logical that Starck looked, in his typical pioneering way, towards our habitats. He gave himself the mission of developing an extended line of pre-fabricated houses, ecological on every level, and reasonable in price. Through his association with the Slovenian company, **Riko**, he has designed extremely elegant wooden houses, concentrating on the bare essentials. Starting with what he describes as “the bones” – a structure with a shared base – options can then be added according to means and whims, with a large variety of additional features available (glass walls, different roof choices, pillars...) plus a choice of leisure possibilities (basements, garages, garden sheds, guest houses, cabins, children’s Wendy houses, swimming pools.)

Aspiring to energy self sufficiency, Starck has injected the highest ecological technical innovations into this project. Some are standard while others are optional – invisible solar panels, wind turbines, granular heating, Canadian wells, heat pumps, rain water collection tanks, natural air conditioning... It takes just a few months to build the houses from start to finish. In France this politically and aesthetically revolutionary house will see the light of day in West Paris

Living in the world and intelligently respecting it or living in a house that respects its context requires above all self respect.

In January 2010 at the Domotex show in Hannover, Philippe Starck will present the fruits of his collaboration with the Danish company **Fletco**. **S+ARCK BY FLETCO** isn’t just a collection of carpets and rugs. “It’s a magic game where every combination is a winning one. This collection of squares offers interior designers and everyone else the chance to infinitely create their own sheet of music, their own work of art.” A game that clearly indicates its view on our disposable society and simultaneously signals that the right objects should confirm their durability.

By resorting to varied material – brushed aluminium, steel, wood, glass - and injecting a note of luminescence, Starck pushes the door to his imagination wide open. The TEXTile production techniques developed by Flecto respect the environment completely thus

corresponding with Starck's own approach. S+ARCK BY FLETCO perfectly marries his ambition to improve the environment, from carpets to wind turbine, via the ecological, economic and responsible house.

An all-embracing designer with a global vision, he aims to give his love of furniture – subversive 20 years ago, inconvertible today – the same demands of dignity for our world and our history. Thus alongside scientists he is currently developing a number of projects including solar hybrid, hydrogen and sailing boats (from 2 to 70 metres long). He is also the depositary of patents for new photovoltaic surfaces and is working on a tourism concept with zero impact on nature. He is also developing H+, a hydrogen car. There is clearly no science without poetic intuition... In short, as long as Philippe Starck can tirelessly lead this combat, there are no limits.

To make this fight for a democratic ecology necessary and essential it must be fundamentally joyous and vibrant while interrogating our habits and ultimately accessing a moral market. Several decades after the early battles to make his products available to everyone, the present has confirmed the visionary correctness of his approach. From defending the environment at all costs to the necessity to leave this planet, we are all implicated in this story – our story. Ignoring the situation isn't good enough; we have to react resolutely to shake it up. The revolution that Starck is offering to lead concerns nothing less than our lifestyles and how to help life continue.

THE FUTURE

“Let's offer our children another history, another romanticism”. Philippe Starck

A polymorphic designer, a nomad perpetually travelling the world with his wife and muse Jasmine, always present where he is least expected (just like in life, “what happens when we do other projects”, joked John Lennon), always looking for natural elegance and a hero of democratic obligation, Philippe Starck will never give up on his hopes, desires, visions and duties.

A major figure on the world's cultural stage, exhibited in the biggest museums (the **Pompidou Centre**, the **Guggenheim** and **MoMA** in **New York**, the **Vitra Design Museum** in Basel, the **MoMA** in **Kyoto**...), at the avant-garde of contemporary environmental concerns and responsibility, the subject of numerous books, omnipresent in the media, professor at the **Domus Academy** in Milan and at the **Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs** in Paris, Philippe Starck is respected for the originality, rigour and quality of his work. Today his name and personality almost belong to the general public having become synonymous with the desire for a better life, here and now of course, but also for tomorrow.

From his accolade of **Officier des Arts et des Lettres** in 1985 to the award of the médaille de **Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur**, in 2000, he has regularly been paid

tribute by his own country as well as internationally by other prestigious institutions such as Harvard from whom he received the Excellence in Design Award in 1997.

His approach – and the praise of movement free of constraints it leads to – was consecrated in 2008 when he accepted the job of **Artistic Director for the French Presidency of the European Union** and then in 2009 when he accepted the post of **Ambassador of Creativity and Innovation**.

He is constantly contacted to share his experience and his vision as much by international conferences as by businesses that see themselves in his work of a 1000 facets, inspired by his pioneering approach. His expertise shines way beyond the world of design. He has quite simply defined new paradigms for our very existence.

His concern for democracy, whether it is ecological or design, is combined with a pedagogical desire to put intelligence and ideas first, wherever they are sexiest. So in June 2009 he presented **La Nuit des Idées** (The Night of Ideas) on Canal +, during which he presented the famous **TED Conference** to demonstrate the sheer brainpower that contributes to our living well and well being. Starck likes quoting Boileau's famous maxim, "Whatever we understand well we express clearly, and words flow with ease". Devoted to the importance of sharing and transmitting he was asked by BBC2 to take part in the television program **Design for Life**, a series of six episodes based around the desire for transmission and a pedagogical concern aiming to demonstrate the mechanisms of creativity with the ambition of encouraging a young English generation to dare to create good objects.

From **high technology** for the individual to necessary mobility, from food, housing, energy production and even clothing, there is no aspect of our daily lives in all its implications that has escaped his subversive, poetic and practical approach. Nothing human is foreign to him. Everything concerns Philippe Starck. From a precocious consciousness of our perilous lifestyles he has drawn even more energy and a will to share his vision. The generosity of his activity - which he refuses to be restricted to any field or any elite - reveals that behind this famous, mediatic designer covered in accolades, is a man who wants the best for all of his fellow human beings.

After three decades of creation, looking to the other side of the stars and the horizon, Starck is now turning towards the **future** more than ever, the destiny that brings us all together. By stimulating vocations and electrifying spirits, his gestures are guided by **love**, an **unsinkable passion** for his neighbour and the resolution to build happy tomorrows. While Rimbaud wrote, "dawns are heartbreaking" Starck will never give up on making sure that they continue to amaze us.

Through his commitment he hopes to help his **cultural tribe** place itself in a fundamental perspective: that of the **progress of humanity** in the heart of the universe. By humbly setting an example, he has shown us that we all have a responsibility to merit our existence and honour the link that unites us by showing **inventiveness, courage, intelligence** and **responsibility**.

Jonathan Wingfield

Website : www.starck.com

Press contact : Camille Pichon

Tel : +33 (0)1 48 07 59 31

Email : camille@starcknetwork.com