

## BIO

Kenneth began his passage to design in 1987 studying Industrial Design at Pratt Institute in New York. While completing his degree, he apprenticed for a leather and wood workshop near Florence, Italy. In 1994, he studied Furniture Marketing and Production at the Export Akademie Baden-Württemberg in Reutlingen, Germany under a private and state scholarship program, and subsequently worked in Bielefeld and Munich.

He returned home to Cebu, Philippines in 1996, to manage Interior Crafts of the Islands, Inc. (ICI). ICI is a furniture design and manufacturing company founded in 1972 by Kenneth's mother Betty Cobonpue, a designer famous for creating new techniques in working with rattan. Discovering that modern design could have a new face using natural fibers and materials as the medium, he slowly created the pieces, which form the collection today. Integrating locally sourced organic materials with innovative hand-made production techniques offered an alternative to the Western definition of modern design.

Kenneth Cobonpue's creations have earned him recognition at home and abroad. Awards to his credit include 12 Mugna and 4 Katha Awards for design excellence at the annual Philippine International Furniture Exhibition. The Japan Good Design Award was presented for 5 of his designs. In 2004, he won first prize at the Singapore International Design Competition for the Croissant Sofa. Kenneth also won a Golden Shell Award in 2002, a citation given by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, for embodying the ideals of Asian design. In 2003, he was chosen as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines for his achievement in the field of Arts & Design. In 2005, Kenneth won the Design for Asia Award of Hong Kong, Asia's highest award, for the Lolah Chair.

Recent works have produced critical acclaim within the design community. Several of his designs were selected for the prestigious International Design Yearbook (Laurence King Publishing) 2002 edition, curated by Ross Lovegrove, the 2004 edition, curated by Tom Dixon and the 2005 edition curated by Marcel Wanders. Phaidon's new 2007 book & FORK underscores Kenneth's position as a leader of a new movement incorporating new technologies with crafts. He has appeared on European television including Deutsche Welle and Dutch TV, countless international magazines such as Wallpaper, Newsweek and TIME Magazine, and respected newspapers including The Washington Post and the Shanghai Daily News. Various Cobonpue designs have also appeared in full-length feature films and television such as Oceans 13 and CSI.

Kenneth reveals new work each year in design shows from Paris to New York. He also speaks regularly about Southeast Asian design all over the world.

## **AWARDS**

Coup de Coeur Award by Home Magazine  
Bloom Lounge Chair, Maison et Objet 2009, Paris, France

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2009,  
Innovation Entrepreneur Award, Shang-ri La Hotel, Makati | 2009

Outstanding Quality and Design Innovation Award  
Lolah Easy Armchair | DECOREX 2008, London, UK

Microsoft Special Award for Most Dynamic Entrepreneur 2007  
Manila Peninsula | Nov 6, 2007

Entrepreneur Magazine's 10 Most Outstanding Entrepreneurs 2007  
Manila Peninsula | Nov 6, 2007

Outstanding Design Prize  
Balou Outdoor | 2005 High Point Show, North Carolina, USA

Design Excellence Award - Best Seating for Lolah outdoor  
Design Excellence Award - Best Chair for Dimple outdoor  
9th Annual IIDA/Hospitality Design Product Competition | May 5, 2005, USA

Design for Asia Award 2005  
Lolah Collection | Business of Design Week by the Hongkong Design Centre | Nov 21, 2005, Hongkong

First Prize, Open Design Category  
Croissant Collection | Singapore International Furniture Design Competition 2004 | Singapore

Awardee, Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines 2004

Good Design Award 2004 – ASEAN Design Collection  
Pigalle Easy Arm Chair, Kabuki Cabinet, One Night Stand Sofa | C-U C-ME Screen  
Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization | Tokyo, Japan

Good Design Award 2003 – ASEAN Design Collection  
Voyage Bed and Yin & Yang Easy Arm Chair | Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization  
Tokyo, Japan

2004 Perlas Award for Outstanding Cebuano  
Presidential Citation for Embodying Ideals of Asian Design  
Given by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo | November 29, 2002,  
Malacanang Palace, Philippines

Craftsmanship Award  
International Contemporary Furniture Fair 2001 | New York, USA

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Nature En Kit, 2009, (PCL Presses Centrales SA, Renens) by Mudac/Infolio éditions, CH-Gollion

1000 New Eco Designs, 2009, (Laurence King Publishing) by Rebecca Proctor

Night Fever 2, 2009, Frame Publishing

Simply Material, 2007, (Viction:Workshop Limited) by Victor Cheung

Design Now!, 2007 (Taschen GmbH) by Charlotte & Peter Fiell

101 Filipino Icons, 2007 (Adarna House, Inc. & Bench) by Ani Rosa Almario & Virgilio Almario, eds.

& Fork, 2007 (Phaidon Press) by Tom Dixon

1000 New Designs and Where to Find Them, 2006 (Laurence King Publishing, Ltd.)  
by Jennifer Hudson

International Design Yearbook 2005 (Lawrence King Publishing House of London)  
curated by Marcel Wanders

International Design Yearbook 2004 (Lawrence King Publishing House of London)  
curated by Tom Dixon

International Design Yearbook 2002 (Lawrence King Publishing House of London)  
curated by Ross Lovegrove.

New Bedroom Design, 2004 (Daab GmbH) by Marcel Wanders 2005

Transparent, 2003, (Octopus Publishing Group Ltd.) by Mitchell Beazley

Tropical Interiors, 2002, (Periplus Editions HK) by Elizabeth Reyes.

Tropical Living, 2000, (Periplus Editions HK) by Elizabeth Reyes. Copyright 2000

TIME magazine, NEWSWEEK, International Herald Tribune, LA Times, ELLE Décor (7 editions), Maison Francaise, Brigitte, Surface, Wallpaper, Interior Design, Architectural Digest, Maison Cote Sud, INTERNI, Eigenhuis, Metropolis, The World of Interiors, Washington Post, Miami Herald, Chicago Tribune and 30 other publications.

## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Speaker, Qi Global,  
Human Progress in Harmony with Nature  
October 8, 2009, Singapore

Speaker, Decorex 2009,  
October 2009, London

Speaker, 7th Hotel Show and Conference  
"21st Century Asian Design"  
June 4, 2007, Dubai, UAE

Speaker, Branding and Design as Success Strategies  
International Forum for the Creation of a Cultural Industry Network  
May 10, 2007, Jeju, Korea

Speaker, 1st CEO 1000 Summit  
Philippine Plaza Hotel  
September 28, 2006, Manila, Philippines

Speaker, Creative Asia Design Forum  
Asian Culture and Design Center  
September 8, 2006, Seoul, Korea

Speaker, TERRA MATTER Design Symposium  
International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF)  
May 20, 2006, New York, USA

Speaker, 8th National Ayala Young Leaders Congress  
"Harnessing People Power for Development"  
February 15-17, 2006 Cavite, Philippines

Speaker, Movement 8: The Highest Expression of Filipino Design  
Gwangju Design Biennale 2005 International Conference  
October 18-20, 2005, Gwangju, Korea

Panelist, International Design Center Nagoya, Japan  
Design symposium: POWER TALK: Design in Asia  
June 17, 2005 Nagoya, Japan

Official Philippine Representative  
1st ASEAN Youth Leader's Forum  
September 2-3, 2004, Singapore  
Organized by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation and  
The Asia News Network

Lecturer and Organizer  
Designer's Guild Furniture Design Workshops 2001-2003,  
Cebu City, Philippines  
Taught younger and aspiring designers from the Visayas region