



*(Design Collection: Little Things in Life)*

## **“S for Social” by Supermama**

Porcelain, plates and pants. These objects seemingly serve only everyday functions, but they also shape how we socialise at dinner, and our perceptions of the users and their cultures. Such invisible outcomes can create more value than the objects’ apparent attributes.

Designers must, therefore, keep in mind how their creations interact with people and the larger society. What kinds of conversation should we encourage among them? What social outcomes are we hoping for? In our four collections, “S for Social”, we explore the designers’ role in society and the positive changes we can bring about.

## Design Collection 1: On Inclusive Design

**DESIGNER:** Supermama is an independent design and gift store that modernises iconic Singapore images for crockery and other everyday items. Its works transcends generations, or what its founders called “contemporary classics”. From porcelain plates to Merlion Daruma, every piece of giftware is a cross-culture collaboration between distinguished Singaporean designers and the finest makers from Japan.

To expand the meanings of “inclusive design”, Supermama had a group of art students\* with mild intellectual disabilities designed two sets of blue-on-white porcelain plates. These special needs persons are empowered to create, instead of having a product designed for their needs. The first series, *Little Things in Life*, is derived from the students’ observations of twigs and branches. Through their eyes, the knobs and grooves of a tree bark appear as many dots and dashes—an innocent and beautiful interpretation of nature’s ways.

The second series, *S for Social*, explores the social relationships of the intellectually disabled. The dotted patterns came out of a lesson on appropriate social distancing with others. Working with stickers representing themselves and others, they learned that it is okay to be physically close with loved ones, but to stand apart from strangers or acquaintances—a social rule that they had not been familiar with. In addition, each plate is overlaid with a letter\* that spells out a social value, presenting an alternative to learning the alphabet through material things.

### **\*Co-Design Partner: JOURNEY, by Touch SpecialCrafts**

JOURNEY is a Singapore brand and platform that represents the creative talents of people with intellectual disabilities. Through this platform, the artworks of special needs artists from TOUCH SpecialCrafts are recognised and shared with a wider public as well as corporate bodies.

The Alphabet chart titled “Altruistic Alphabet” is contributed by Lanzavecchia + Wai.

[www.supermamastore.com](http://www.supermamastore.com)

## Design Collection 2: On Sustainability

**DESIGNER:** Gim worked in fashion in London, Tokyo and Helsinki where she observed a large amount of waste generated during production and creative processes. Hence, the designer, who is now based in Singapore and specialises in fashion product development, thought about a more sustainable approach to design and textile usage. Her creations are presented under the label, shales (shales.sg). Gim was trained in womenswear at Central Saint Martins as well as Tokyo’s Musashino Art University.

Instead of starting from sketches, the designer of the *Kolmio* jacket worked with the patterns first, in a way that would produce no textile waste. Therefore, the design’s pattern is in the shape of a rectangle, square or triangle, to ensure that there’s no wastage between the pieces. She also chose the fabric based on its width, so that the patterns fit from end to end.

*Orimono* is a collection of card holders and wallets made of washable paper and are each folded into form from just one square or rectangle cut-out. Besides reducing waste, this approach also eliminates the need for other haberdashery such as snap buttons and zips, thus making the items biodegradable. The designer is also developing a multifunctional paper pattern that can be folded into different products.

The *Fugu* soft tote is similarly created from a rectangular pattern. The textile is an innovation of Miniwiz, a Taiwan-based company that develops recycled PET bottles for consumer products and building construction.

[www.shales.sg](http://www.shales.sg)

## Design Collection 3: On Mindful Consumption

**DESIGNER:** Menswear label Biro is founded by brothers Kenghow and Kage, who are obsessed with exceptional fabrics from Japan. It shows in their clothing, which have an added softness and superior colour fastness because most are made out of textiles that are yarn-dyed and woven by vintage machines. The self-taught fashion designers were inspired by their seamstress mother to enter their trade, and like her, they design clothing with an understanding of their fabrics and its behaviours. The resulting garments are a comfortable marriage between artisanal knitting techniques and modern, minimalist styles.

Biro's latest collection, *F. Classic*, consists of eight menswear essentials: a T-shirt, polo shirt, long-sleeve shirt, short-sleeve shirt, pants, Bermuda shorts, sports jacket and a coat. They are uniformly white to emphasise on their materiality. The fabric of the T-shirt, for example, is made from loopwheel (tsuri ami) machines that slowly weave the cotton yarn around a cylinder, allowing the fabric to fall and stack loosely. As no tension is applied on the yarn, a soft yet strong textile emerges.

*F. Classic* is part of Biro's continuing effort to break away from the relentless pace of fast fashion. Over the years, the brand has maintained a collection of staple designs, launching only a few pieces each season. By calling attention to the technical and ethical considerations that go into making the textiles, the brothers also hope to encourage mindful consumption—reflecting their belief that sustainability is the future of fashion.

[www.birocompany.com](http://www.birocompany.com)

## Design Collection 4: On Mindful Consumption

**DESIGNER:** Studio Juju produces furniture, product and spatial designs that harmonise simplicity and warmth, functionalism and whimsy, refinement and relevance. Founded by Timo Wong and Priscilla Lui in 2009, the duo was named just two years later as *Designers of the Future* by Design Miami/ Basel. In 2014, they received the President's Design Award, Singapore's most prestigious design accolade, for their *Rabbit & the Tortoise Collection*, which reimagines the form of a table for playful and fluid living spaces.

Studio Juju's latest collections are two tableware sets that prompt diners to consider how they eat, both alone and together. *Tingkat Set* is inspired by the tiffin box traditionally used in Singapore for transporting meals but reimagined for the home. It consists of two porcelain bowls and a plate for serving dishes during a family meal, and they can be stacked to store leftovers for loved ones returning home later. Accompanying this set is a glass cup, which is pinched in the middle for the hand to cradle more comfortably.

*Kopitiam Set* updates the porcelain cups used at traditional coffee shops in Singapore. The original design is a cross between the espresso and coffee cup for serving a rich espresso-like local coffee that is savoured like a regular brew. It also has an additional "wall" beneath the ear for users to rest their finger and lift the cup without getting burned. Studio Juju subtly refines the form and construction of this cup while maintaining its proportions, evoking a renewed sense of familiarity as one enjoys his or her morning brew.

[www.studio-juju.com](http://www.studio-juju.com)

## About Supermama Store

Founded as an independent design and gift store in 2010, Supermama Store seeks to provide some museum-like respite to the busyness of the urban life. What started off as a couple's radical decision to steal some time away from work for their young children has evolved into Singapore's go-to source for well designed souvenirs and lifestyle goods.

The concept of giving is central to Supermama. We believe that good stories, good design and good crafts make good gifts. From the classic blue white porcelain to contemporary daily wares, every piece of Supermama giftware is meticulously made by some of the finest makers in Japan and tells of a lesser known Singapore story.

"Contemporary Classics", the two words that define our work, speaks about the idea of timelessness that transcends across different generations, borders and cultures. These broad concepts are translated through our original and thoughtful designs. We are always in search of familiar archetypes (in materials and cultures), giving it a fresh coat of paint through contemporary design (in graphics and form) and re-presenting it as modern day classics - making them the perfect gift for every occasion.

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