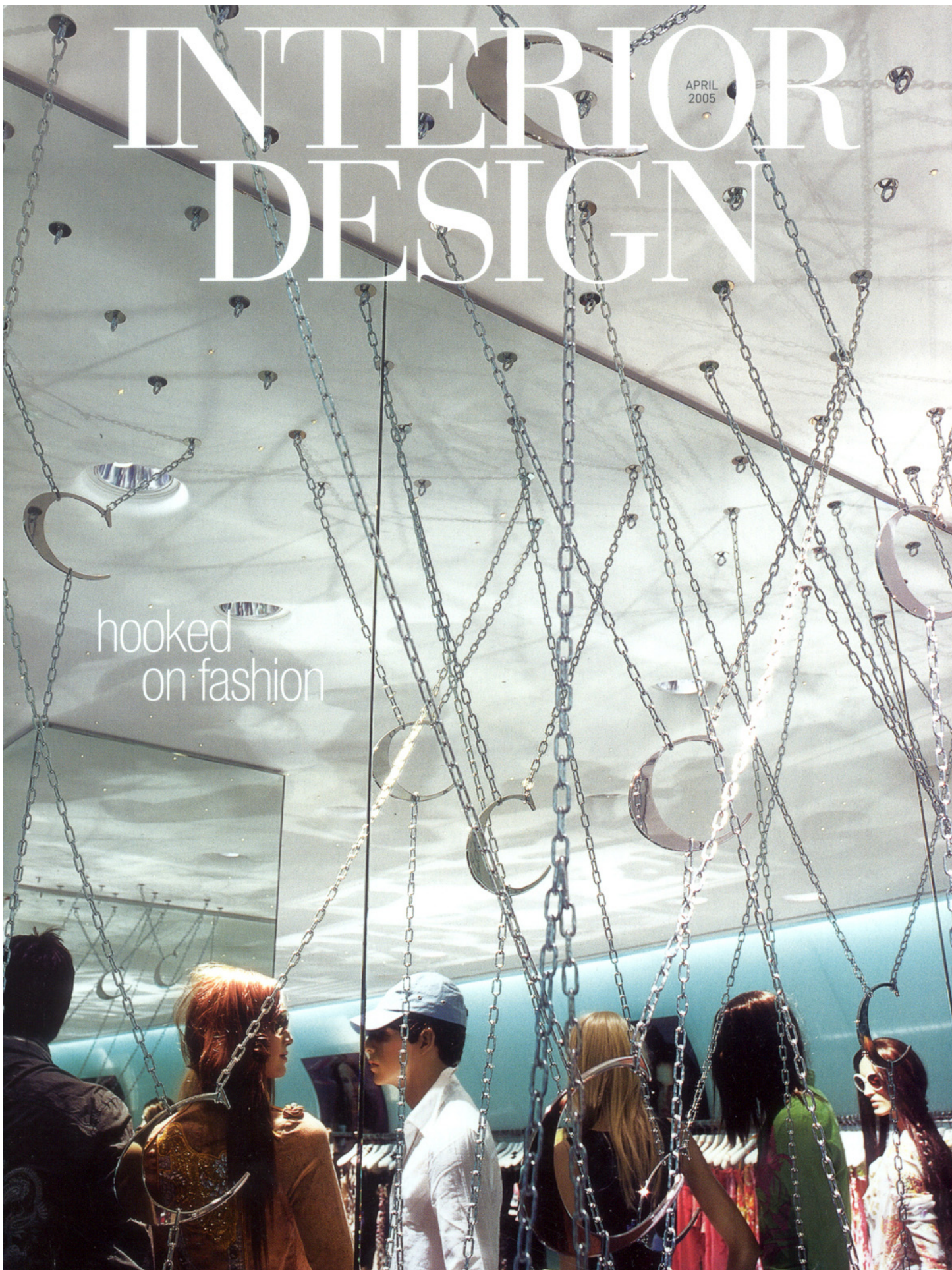


INTERIOR DESIGN

APRIL
2005

hooked
on fashion



centerfold



walk this way

Marloes ten Bhömer believes her shoes can change the world, one step at a time

IN THE SPACE BETWEEN DESIGN DISCIPLINES, strangely beautiful objects live. And 26-year-old Marloes ten Bhömer is making them. Part fashion and part architecture, her startling shoes feature heels that cantilever and curtain-wall toes that obscure the foot's shape, defying their impossible profiles to actually function. Ever since her undergrad years, studying product design at the Academy of Visual Arts and Design in the Dutch city of Arnhem, ten Bhömer has been fascinated by shoes as utilitarian structures, and their small scale meant she could fabricate them in her tiny home studio.

At the Royal College of Art in London, she began developing

sculpted, folded footwear and contributing technical drawings and prototypes to fashion mavericks such as Alexander McQueen and Boudicca.

Ten Bhömer's concepts crystallized in a product-design class taught by architect Ron Arad, whose own products and buildings push the envelope of conceptual design. "Why should things make themselves understood immediately?" she asks. Her lucky break came when Arad recommended his star pupil for a summer internship at the Italian design office of Tod's—echoes of her sketches even showed up in a spring/summer 2003 leather shoe made for sister company Hogan.

For her own line, named Hunt, inspiration runs the gamut from Daniel Libeskind's buildings to Vivienne Westwood's dresses,

which ten Bhömer extols as "totally reshaped, so they don't appear to be made of ordinary fabric." Complex construction, borrowed from furniture design, drives Hunt's silhouettes.

Leather strips fold origami-like around a foot, wrap it like ribbon, or form a layered mass resembling papier-mâché. For some shoes, ten Bhömer presses sheets of carbon fiber into molds. Others, she constructs of papery foam or poured polyurethane resin. Her favorite material is carbon fiber, standard in bicycles, chairs, crutches, and the upper bodies of cars.

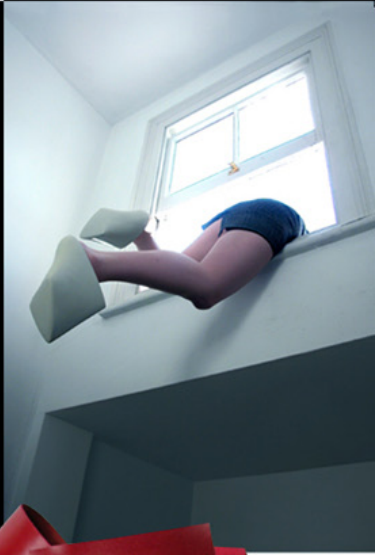
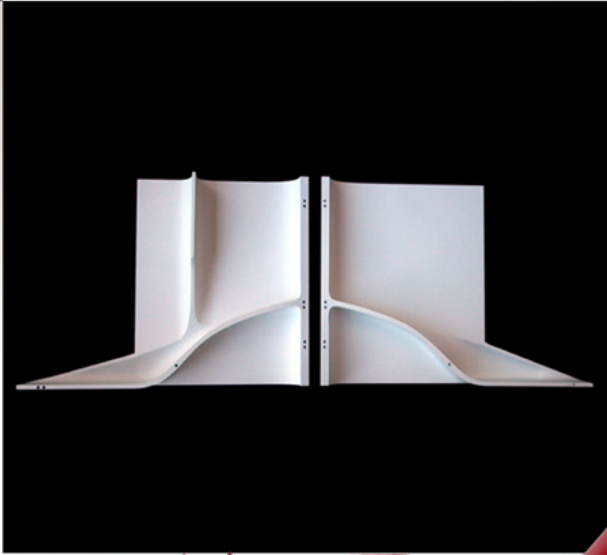
"Not only do materials and methods make a shoe look different, but they also change the way you walk—and think," ten Bhömer says. "Forms that ignore convention liberate design."

—Kelly Beamon

MARLOES TEN BHÖMER



Clockwise from top left: A single piece of leather, cut and folded, forms futuristic pumps. These heelless shoes are polyurethane resin. Several leather insoles, molded on a shoemaker's last, are cut and glued together to cradle the foot.



MARLOES TEN BÖMER

Clockwise from top left: Mules consist of folded durable plastic uppers and beech wood soles. Marloes ten Böhmer calls this material "leather-mâché." These wedges are foam. Polyurethane resin shoes stay on, thanks to molded niches inside. "Leather-mâché" appears in a looser form. The two halves of this single leather shoe are designed using a computer-driven milling program. A shoe with a curtain-wall toe breaks with convention.