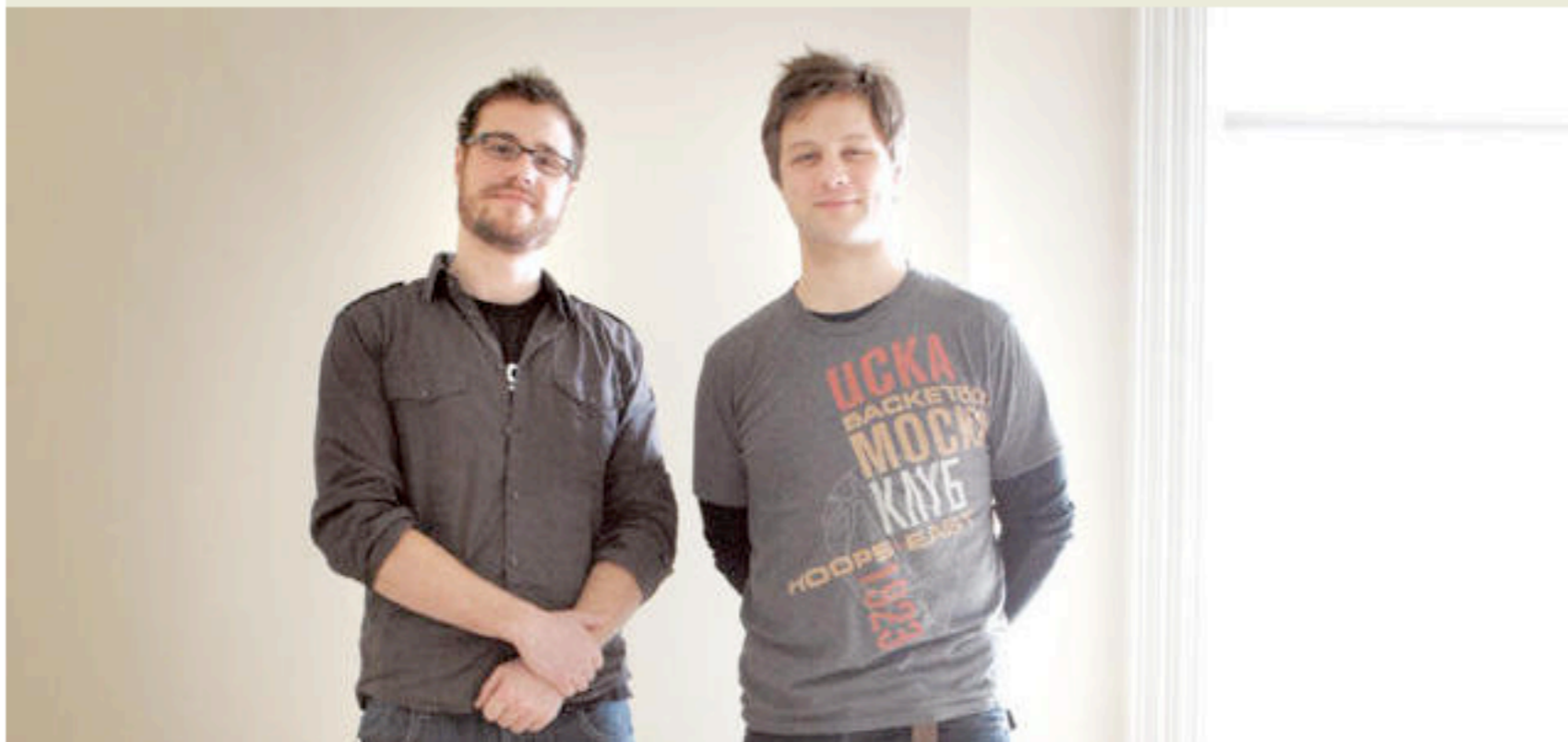


HOUSE CALL



Room to View

BY ALEX LAWS February 20, 2008 14:02

WHO: Pietro Gagliano, 28, graphic designer and owner of TrueFalse Studio and Peter Wehrspann, 29, furniture designer and owner of Holtzundmetal.

WHAT: Furniture and graphic design duo Peter Wehrspann and Pietro Gagliano joined forces to create "We, the Consumed," an installation that provocatively addresses consumer culture in room 208 at the Gladstone Hotel as part of Come Up to My Room, the boutique hotel's annual alternative design event that showcases emerging interior design talents in each of the rooms on the second floor from Feb. 22-24.

WHERE: The Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen W. www.gladstonehotel.com.

FAVOURITE THING: "The fact that we created it," says Wehrspann of their installation in room 208.

LEAST FAVOURITE THING: "We put so much into it and it'll only be around for three days," says Wehrspann. "That and we can't stay there!" adds Gagliano.

THE STORY: Having met at the Sheridan College of Art and Design, Wehrspann and Gagliano were curious to see what would happen when they merged their two disciplines. Come Up to My Room presented the ideal opportunity for their first professional collaboration, the empty room providing what Wehrspann called "a blank 3-D canvas."

The designers' varying backgrounds allowed them to bring different skills to said canvas.

Wehrspann started out as a carpenter and is accustomed to working in a concrete medium, whereas Gagliano is more familiar with the conceptual side of design. Gagliano appreciated the tangible quality of the project, pointing out, "You can't touch a logo or website."

The pair's publicity materials describe the room as "a conversation between consumption and the consumed." They explain that they set out to make a statement about rampant consumerism through the context of interior design and hope to raise awareness in both consumers and designers about the choices they make every day.

"We're gonna make a nice-looking living room with a voice you can't help but be influenced by," says Wehrspann. Each piece of furniture in the room addresses a different element of what Gagliano calls the "gluttony of consumption." Therefore, the coffee table is made from maple wood that is Forest Stewardship Council-accredited lumber (FSC is a membership-based organization promoting responsible management of the world's forests through a recognized certification system) and steel, which retains its properties well after recycling.

The decline of local produce is depicted in a graphic story featuring a single caged rabbit that represents small farms, juxtaposed with a fistful of dollars, symbolic of big businesses. Meanwhile, the Media Stand, designed to hold a television, is embedded with relevant trivia, like the fact that the average North American is exposed to 3,000 advertisements on a daily basis.

They may not be providing a solution to our lust for stuff, but Gagliano and Wehrspann want to raise awareness around and encourage more conscious living. As Gagliano says, "Our thought process is part of the furniture."

COME UP TO MY ROOM INSTALLATIONS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FEB 22 NOON-8PM; FEB 23 NOON-10PM; FEB 24 NOON-5PM. \$6.50 INCL CATALOGUE.
WWW.GLADSTONEHOTEL.COM/CUTMR. EMAIL LETTERS@EYEWEEKLY.COM.