



## things we saw in tokyo

Last month we reported on all the interesting Japanese design we saw at Tokyo Designers Week, which is now officially our favourite design show in the world. But we bumped into loads of talented people from outside Japan as well, so over the next few pages we present some of our most interesting discoveries.

### Canadian National Design Team

Canadian designers were the surprise hit at this year's Tokyo Designers Week. A group calling themselves the Canadian National Design Team put on a show at the Canadian Embassy called "No Apologies Necessary: Design From Canada" which included a range of fresh and inspiring work.

The aim of the show was to overturn stereotypes about Canada, explained Beth Hawthorn of exhibition organiser Bark Design Collective of Vancouver. "Our image, especially in Asia, is strikingly out of sync with reality. Canadians are seen as a painfully polite, terribly dull bunch whose greatest contributions to humanity are maple syrup, smoked salmon and log cabins."

She added: "We wanted the exhibition to break away from these bygone stereotypes, to provoke entirely new perceptions abroad of our country as dynamic, cosmopolitan and outrageously experimental."

It seems that the Economist magazine agrees with her. In September, it declared that there was a "new spirit" in the country, saying "Canada is now rather cool" and featuring a moose wearing sunglasses on its cover.

This was the first time that the Canadians had put on a show at Tokyo Designers Week, which is increasingly being used by foreign embassies as a way of celebrating their domestic design talent.

The No Apologies Necessary show featured the work of 25 contemporary designers and architects, while a second exhibition at the Canadian Embassy featured the work of Winnipeg design and graphic collective Mother. Called Cabin, the show took a slightly different take on Canadian culture, choosing to celebrate the country's relationship with nature through a range of ironic, folksy products.