

A day in the life of Ernesto Bones

Stanley Picker Gallery, London
March 2011

Beijing Design Week 2011, Beijing
September 2011

Ab Rogers Design

AB
ROGERS
DESIGN

Introduction

London-based Ab Rogers Design (ARD) has created an interactive, multi-sensory installation that tells the story of 24 hours in the life of a fictional character, Ernesto Bones. “My name is Ernesto Bones and I write to you with an important request. I have a very serious problem that only you can help fix. You see, though I am writing to you now, I do not yet truly exist...”

So began 24 letters that were sent to 24 invited contributors, each of whom was asked to write the story of one hour in Bones’ day. ARD then created an imaginative design object based on each of these fragments, incorporating vibrant colours, surprising textures, sounds smells and tastes to create a sparkling and multi-layered surrealistic mélange.

The premise of the exhibition evolved from the Surrealist game of ‘Exquisite Corpse’, whereby a collage of words, images and meanings is collectively assembled, with each consecutive hour’s account constructing a new fragment of our fictional character’s entire day. To inspire the collaborators in their writing, 24 objects from the truly extraordinary collection at the Stanley Picker House in Kingston upon Thames, were selected, photographed and then sent out together with the last line of the previous hour’s narrative, for each contributing writer to breathe life into the ‘exquisite corpse’ of Ernesto Bones himself.

The “creative souls” who collaboratively wrote the story of Bones’ one and only day of existence included culinary alchemist Heston Blumenthal, art critic Adrian Searle, advertising creative John Hegarty, fashion designer Tom Scott, musician Daniel Hunt of Ladytron, artist Charlotte Cullinan, illustrator Sara Fanelli, author Miranda Carter and architect Andrea Branzi amongst others.

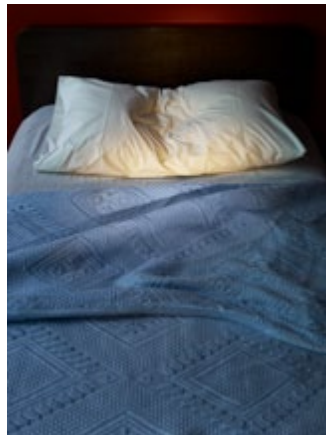
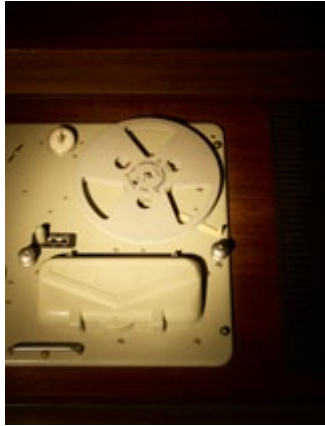
The exhibition was conceived as part of ARD’s Stanley Picker Fellowship at Kingston University, and produced with support from students from Kingston University’s MA Curating Contemporary Design and BA Interior Design courses. It opened in spring 2011 at Stanley Picker Gallery in Kingston, UK, and had continued its journey to Beijing for the Beijing Design Week, where it was installed in the courtyard buildings of No. 7 Zhujia Hutong in the edgy Dashilar area of Beijing, part of the historic region south of Tiananmen Square.

Echoing the circular relationship of art to life to art, ‘A Day in the Life of Ernesto Bones’ reflects upon the dynamics of collaborative production, the nature of the exhibition as a creative process in and of itself and the narrative possibilities of design scenarios.

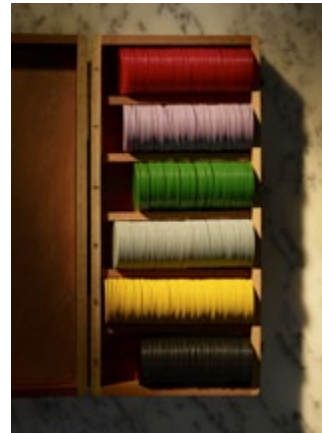
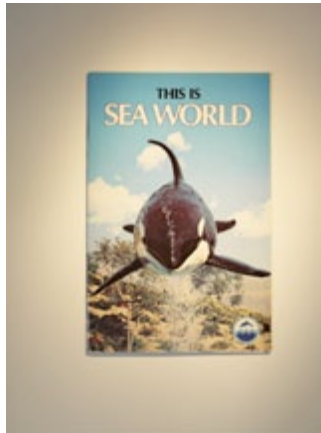
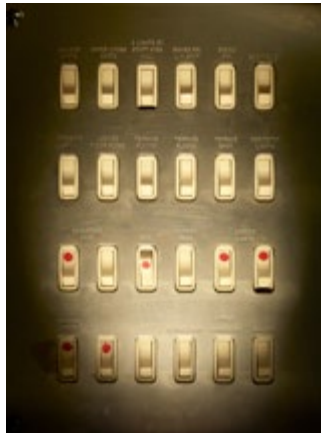
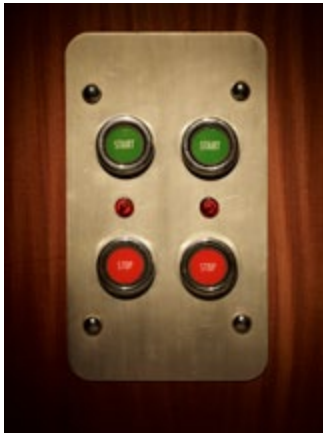
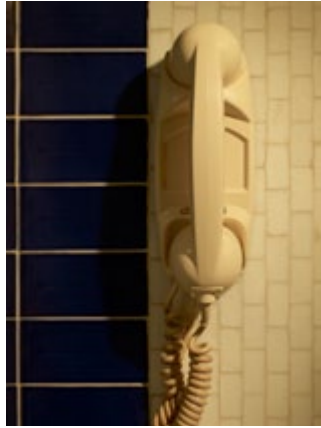


Interior of the Stanley Picker House in Kingston

The 24 objects



The 24 objects



The letter to contributors

Dear
Sara Fanelli,
Heston Blumenthal,
Tom Scott,
Monica Narula,
Jane Nisselson,
Ben Kelly,
Deyan Sudjic,
Michael Elias,
David Tanguy,
Adrian Searle,
Charlotte Cullinan,
Miranda Carter,
Shelley Fox,
Lesley Bunch,
Fergus Henderson,
Helena Reckitt,
Jane Withers,
Simon Ofield-Kerr,
Aric Chen,
Daniel Hunt,
Susan Cohn,
Andrea Branzi,
Michael Connor,
and John Hegarty,

My name is Ernesto Bones and I write to you with a very serious problem only you can help fix. You see, though I am writing to you now, I do not yet truly exist. I have no substance, no qualities or limitations. I may be a pirate or flâneur, a blueblood or an arriviste; I may be whatever you make me. You, are recruited to give me form, to anchor me to earth and to tell my story.

My possessions are extraordinary and unique. The objects, books, drawings, art, sculpture and records in my gallery and home, the Stanley Picker house, can inspire you like nothing else. Your visit will not only give me life but will also complete the design narrative for a 2011 installation at the Stanley Picker Gallery in Kingston-upon-Thames. As your participation join those of your fellow souls, a story will take shape that will be translated into a dynamic, multi-sensual installation by Ab Rogers Design. Your will direct my metamorphosis from fiction into physical reality, as my day is reinterpreted as a dynamic spatial installation full of colour, movement and light.

My life is in your hands.

Yours in your debt,
Ernesto Bones

Stanley Picker Gallery, London



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short

**Beijing Design Week 2011,
Dashilar Alley of Beijing**



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



Photography John Short



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Photography John Short

Selected press

Beijing Design Week 2011

Meet a man who never existed



What makes a man? In **A Day in the life of Ernesto Bones**, the answer to that existential conundrum is 24 creative minds, some writing equipment and, by the sounds of it, quite a lot of alcohol. The brainchild – literally – of London-based designer Ab Rogers, Ernesto Bones began as an idea for a narrative-led design project and ended up a human being who 'lived' for just one day. Rogers contacted 24 creative types, including molecular gastronomist Heston Blumenthal, award-winning children's illustrator Sara Fanelli and Ladytron musician Daniel Hunt, one after the other, and asked them to write an hour of Ernesto's 'day'. All they had to inspire them was the last sentence of the previous hour – written by the prior recipient – and an object representing one of Ernesto's possessions.

Upon receiving all of Ernesto's errant hours, our Doctor Frankendesign, Rogers, was joined by a team of Igors (members of his own design team plus students from the UK's Kingston University) to construct a series of 24 designs illustrating Ernesto's one day of 'existence', each accompanied by the text that inspired it. As Rogers explains: 'we wanted to take this concept further – not merely to tell a story about our design for the project, but to make the story the design itself.' The Beijing edition will include a projected film narrating Ernesto's day as well as music from Daniel Hunt and objects including a great big cow hammock. The result is a look at a man who is thoughtful, reflective and perhaps a little bit too attached to booze – the latter being a surprise to Rogers, who laughs: 'Perhaps it's reflective of the creative bunch we approached.'

Venue: Dashilar

Time Out Beijing

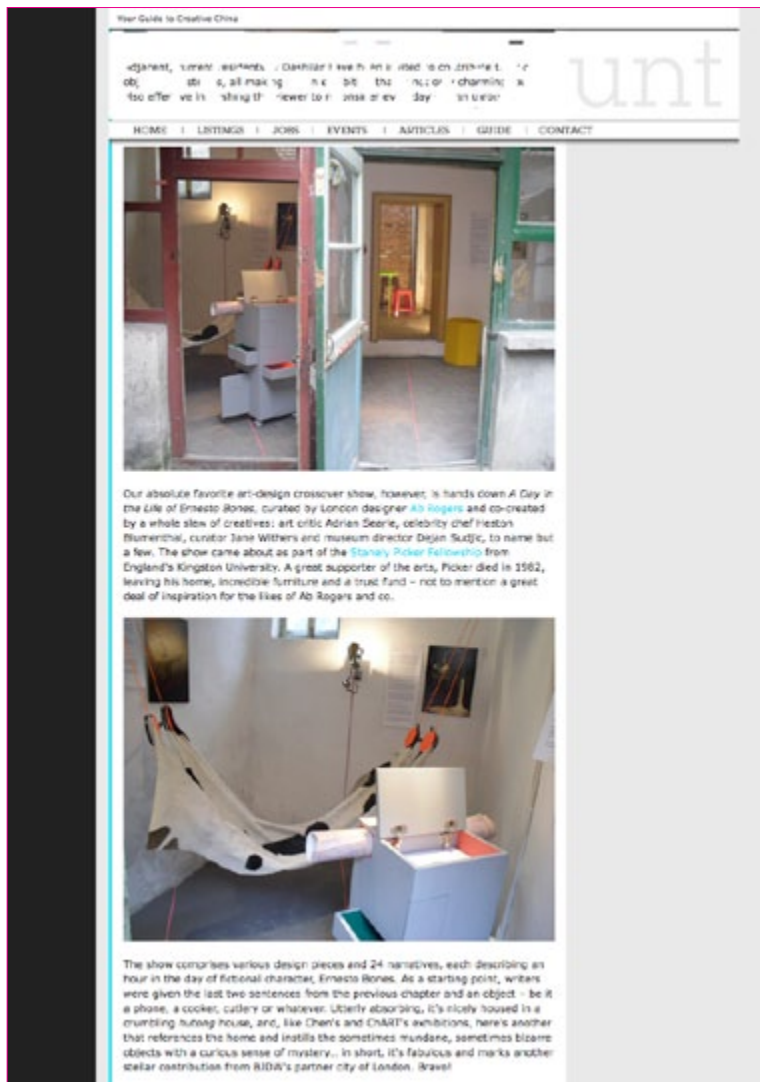
www.timeoutbeijing.com/features/Feature/12915/Beijing-Design-Week.html

"What makes a man? In *A Day in the life of Ernesto Bones*, the answer to that existential conundrum is 24 creative minds, some writing equipment and, by the sounds of it, quite a lot of alcohol. The brainchild – literally – of London-based designer Ab Rogers, Ernesto Bones began as an idea for a narrative-led design project and ended up a human being who 'lived' for just one day. Rogers contacted 24 creative types, including molecular gastronomist Heston Blumenthal, award-winning children's illustrator Sara Fanelli and Ladytron musician Daniel Hunt, one after the other, and asked them to write an hour of Ernesto's 'day'. All they had to inspire them was the last sentence of the previous hour – written by the prior recipient – and an object representing one of Ernesto's possessions.

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Selected press

Beijing Design Week 2011



Review from Creative Hunt

<http://www.creativehunt.com/beijing/wire/>

"Our absolute favorite art-design crossover show, however, is hands down A Day in the Life of Ernesto Bones, curated by London designer Ab Rogers and co-created by a whole slew of creatives: art critic Adrian Searle, celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal, curator Jane Withers and museum director Dejan Sudjic, to name but a few. The show came about as part of the Stanely Picker Fellowship from England's Kingston University. A great supporter of the arts, Picker died in 1982, leaving his home, incredible furniture and a trust fund – not to mention a great deal of inspiration for the likes of Ab Rogers and co.

The show comprises various design pieces and 24 narratives, each describing an hour in the day of fictional character, Ernesto Bones. As a starting point, writers were given the last two sentences from the previous chapter and an object – be it a phone, a cooker, cutlery or whatever. Utterly absorbing, it's nicely housed in a crumbling hutong house, and, like Chen's and ChART's exhibitions, here's another that references the home and instills the sometimes mundane, sometimes bizarre objects with a curious sense of mystery... in short, it's fabulous and marks another stellar contribution from BJDW's partner city of London. Bravo!"

Selected press

Beijing Design Week 2011


ab rogers: the life of ernesto bones

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ab rogers: the life of ernesto bones



ab rogers: the life of ernesto bones

3 pm to 4 pm | by adrian warric, art critic, london

image © designboom

london-based designer [ab rogers](#) has created the installation 'a day in the life of ernesto bones' for [beijing design week 2011](#). the exhibition tells the story of a single day in the life of the fictional character 'ernesto bones', as told collaboratively by twenty-four individuals hailing from various creative backgrounds and locations around the globe. in a modern interpretation of the surrealist game 'twainite corpse'—especially popular in paris in the 1930s—each artist was asked to write the story of a single hour of bones's life and to produce a corresponding image or installation. the designers received only the final two sentences of the previous hour's account and a photograph by john stuart of a generic, household item from the stanley plucker house in kingston upon thames. the glimpse one designer has of the previous artist's interpretation help to form the tale of one day in the life of mr. bones.

the exhibition was installed in the courtyard of building number seven of the zhujia hutong in the gashilar section of beijing.

very rarely had he received any other sort of letter, the kind that began my darling ernesto or ernesto dearest, light of my life. only once, in fact. this very day. it had been sitting innocently on the hall table all now, and i've taken the opportunity. kids in hand.

Designboom

<http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/10/view/18352/ab-rogers-the-life-of-ernesto-bones.html>

Links:

Short films of the 2 venues



A Day in the Life of Ernesto Bones
Stanley Picker Gallery, London

<http://vimeo.com/abrogersdesign/ernestobones>



A Day in the Life of Ernesto Bones
Beijing Design Week 2011

<http://vimeo.com/30539963>

Thank you

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