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DESIGN

PROJECT *Scrumptious Reads*

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DELICIOUS
DESIGN

Paper cups proved to be perfect building blocks to create an installation for a culinary bookstore in Brisbane

How many uses are there for a paper cup? For Melody Chen and James Hung, the humble cafe object was the key to creating a dynamic temporary installation space for *Scrumptious Reads*, a new concept store specialising in books and products related to food and drink.

With a tight timeframe – four weeks for design and documentation, plus one week for installation – and an equally tight budget – just \$4000 – it was crucial for Chen and Hung to find a creative solution. “We had to think about a material that would be readily available, and also speak their brand identity,” Melody Chen says.

Inspired by the theme of the shop, Chen and Hung looked at different containers associated with food and hospitality – milk crates, rice boxes, take-away containers. In the end, a natural-coloured, corrugated cup made from recycled paper proved to be the winner. “We really liked the form of it and the versatility,” Chen says. “It works a bit like a brick – it is modularised and structural, so it can create



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Paper cups create a wavy form that reflects Brisbane's topography. The view from the street into *Scrumptious Reads*; The cups create structures strong enough to support benchtops; Sculptural forms soften the harsh light of the existing space.

all these different shapes and heights.”

Chen and Hung used 7800 cups, 14,000 pins and 5500 fold-back clips to create a diverse and tactile landscape with references to Brisbane's undulating topography. A curvilinear benchtop was constructed to serve as a base template, over which the cups were assembled, held together by pins.

Although paper is generally associated with fragility and flimsiness, the installation was constructed in a way that showed how surprisingly robust paper cups could be. “A lot of people who came into the shop were worried that they'd knock it and the whole thing would fall down,” Chen says, “but it was actually a very strong structure that lasted the whole time.”

Another challenge of the space was the harsh, fluorescent lighting. “Because it's a temporary shop we had to work with existing lights, and anything we constructed had to be moved and detached without damaging anything,” Chen explains. To overcome this, they made sculptural filters by clustering together cups and connecting them with bottle

clips, creating an organic ceiling-scape that diffused the harsh lights.

The use of readily available materials and low-tech construction methods meant that anyone could assist with the installation to meet the tight budget. “Another good thing is that after the shop is dissembled, all the materials can be used again,” Chen says.