

# FLEETING SEATING

*The slightly uncomfortable chair collection*



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*The slightly uncomfortable chair collection / Another SID LEE fanzine*

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# SUCC

FOR SHORTER MEETINGS

Every day, countless  
work hours are wasted  
in endless meetings.  
Our solution?  
SUCC: a Slightly  
Uncomfortable Chair  
Collection, for shorter  
and more efficient  
meetings.



“Meetings are too long,” says Louis-Thomas Pelletier, a Rimouski-born Montrealer who’s worked with Sid Lee for eight years, handling such contracts as Loto-Québec and Société des Alcools du Québec.

“I became a creative director a few years ago and I realized that increasingly, I was spending a lot of time in meetings. Eventually, I thought, we should find a way to make them shorter. We waste a lot of time in meetings. That’s obvious to anyone who’s ever worked at an agency. We would gain a lot of productivity if we had shorter meetings.”

That got Pelletier to thinking about the direction of office furniture was taking—increasingly soft and pneumatic chairs that one could easily fall asleep in (“Sometimes I have, actually,” says Pelletier).

“I remember when I was a kid, there was a rumour—I don’t know if it was true—that at McDonalds, the benches were made so that you wouldn’t spend too much time there.”

From that thought came the idea for the *Slightly Uncomfortable Chair Collection*. “It’s an evolution of that, but with an artistic twist.”

Pelletier’s idea was convincing enough that his superiors at Sid Lee suggested he bring it to fruition with the help of Quebec City-born Gabrielle Saint-Pierre, a new designer at the company who, like Pelletier, has a knack for making the best of physical spaces. A key factor for the SUCC was that the chairs should be uncomfortable but not ugly.

“We started working and came up with many models that

would be very funny,” recalls Pelletier, “but then when we met with the people at Sid Lee Collective, they insisted—and it made sense—that they also be something very artful, something that would be worthy of design magazines. Not only this weird idea, but something formally beautiful.”

“We had a choice for the design,” says Saint-Pierre, “to go more aesthetic or more conceptual. We chose to go conceptual, that’s why the chairs are so slick and archetypal. Really, really simple. I asked to have that slick finish, a classy element to contrast with the uncomfortable aspect.”

“We wanted them to look like they’re a family,” Pelletier points out. “We didn’t want to make one chair and then another, and you wouldn’t see the link

between the two (other than that they’re both uncomfortable). We wanted the chairs in the collection to look mostly the same, but with slight differences.”

“They’re nice alone,” concludes Saint-Pierre, “but nicer with their family.”

The trick was generating mild irritation, not outright torture. “I like the fact that sometimes the discomfort is physical, like with the Rococo, rocking side to side,” says Pelletier, “and sometimes it’s psychological, like the Talking Head, which makes you the dwarf at the table.”

“That’s the concept—slightly uncomfortable. Just a bit,” says Saint-Pierre. “At first, you’re not that bad, but after five minutes, it’s really uncomfortable.”

“A meeting should be just as long as you can sit on those chairs,” adds Pelletier.

The SUCC was unveiled at the 2008 SIDIM (Salon International du Design d’Intérieur de Montréal) to surprisingly positive reactions. “We had some interest, people pointing at them and laughing,” Pelletier recalls. “Some guy said to me, ‘Man, I smoke pot and have long hair, but you’re crazy!’ Some people asked to buy them, perhaps in different colours, and how much they were, and we didn’t know what to answer yet.”

“A woman came up to me,” says Saint-Pierre, “and said, ‘Oh... my... God. That’s what I’ve been looking for. I sent a letter to my company to say that meetings are too long.’ She’d made a financial plan to explain how much money they lost during the meetings. That was perfect.”

The SUCC appears at the new Sid Lee store in Amsterdam in the fall of 2008, and in Milan next year. Could the SUCC, with the discomfort dialed down a touch, become commonplace? “I think they’ll remain as uncomfortable as they are right now,” says Pelletier. “I don’t think we’ll compromise on that. But I can see corporations buying some for their conference rooms and boardrooms—to make a point, a reminder to their employees. There is a potential market for it, a niche market—but I don’t see them being distributed through Ikea.” ■



# GOTTAGO

ALWAYS BE ON YOUR TOES

“The back of the chair is at a bad angle, so you’re always on your toes, as if you’re about to leave. The perfect excuse—you’re already in a position to go, so it helps you make the move.”

– *Louis-Thomas*



# ROCKOCO

THE NEW ART OF ROCKING

“It’s like a rocking chair but in the inverse way. It’s fun because it doesn’t stay. You have to put it up to use it, and then you have to keep it stable. Just looking at it down on the floor, you know it won’t be comfortable.”

– *Gabrielle*



# SPACE INVADER

KEEP IT OUT OF YOUR PRIVATE SPACE

“It basically invades your private space—you don’t want a chair to go there.”

– *Louis-Thomas*



# SUGAR FIX

STABILIZE IT WITH PACKETS OF SUGAR

“There’s one leg shorter  
than the other ones;  
you can fix it with  
a few packets of sugar.”  
– *Gabrielle*

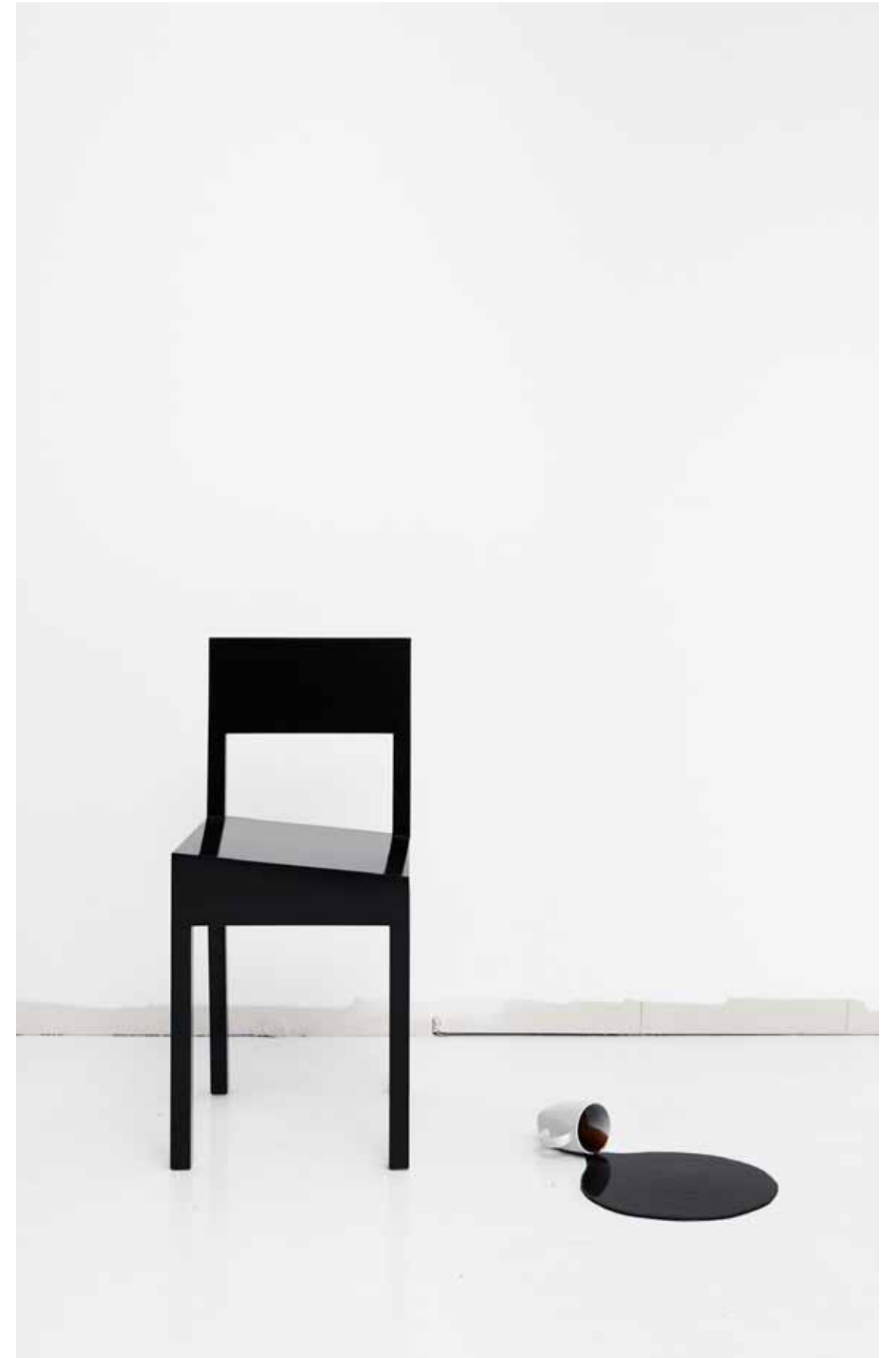


# WALLET FACTOR

CARRY THICK WALLET FOR BEST COMFORT

“The seat is angled right to left, so if you carry your wallet in your back pocket, it will equalize you. You’ll be stable. Your comfort depends on the thickness of your wallet.”

– *Louis-Thomas*



# TALKING HEAD

KEEP A LOW PROFILE AROUND THE TABLE

“It’s very, very low so  
there’s only your head at  
the table.”

– *Louis-Thomas*





# SID LEE COLLECTIVE

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Sid Lee Collective is an incubator that allows our team to push the boundaries of creativity further. Sid Lee Collective undertakes cultural and commercial projects in the fields of visual arts, industrial design, music, publishing, etc.

A brainchild of Sid Lee, the Collective thrives on collaboration and experimentation. The Sid Lee Collective Amsterdam space is the first public venue operated by our team. We hope it will give a modest preview of Montreal and Canadian creativity while acting as a stimulant for our visitors' curious minds.

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TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE  
OR TO SEND US COMMENTS, PLEASE VISIT  
[www.sidleecollective.com](http://www.sidleecollective.com)

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# ABOUT SID LEE

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Sid Lee is a company that develops brand experiences—by conceiving products, services and spaces—and markets them through advertising, experiential marketing, branded content and interactive communications.

To embed brands, products, spaces and services with more meaning and more resonance, we have assembled one of the most diverse creative teams in the world. Professionals from a vast array of disciplines—architecture, advertising, digital marketing, design, content, etc.—work without barriers between their numerous crafts. Commercial Creativity is how we describe this novel approach, which is both integrated and multidisciplinary.

Our 250 artisans work globally for top-tier clients from our Montreal and Amsterdam ateliers.

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TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US, PLEASE VISIT  
[www.sidlee.com](http://www.sidlee.com)

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You can also read the book *Conversational Capital: How to Create Stuff People Love to Talk About* (conversationalcapital.com) to understand our strategic marketing thinking.

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**SID LEE WANTS TO THANK...**

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*Another* **SID LEE** *fansine*