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## ARCHITECTURAL ARTISTRY

Jessica Doyle talks to Dutch design duo Studio Lawrence about their recent move to London and, overleaf, gives a round-up of other news and events

For Dutch architects Bart Eijking and Patrick de Louwere, the link between designing not only a building but also its interiors and furniture is 'a good British tradition' - which perhaps explains their choice to move their furniture design firm, Studio Lawrence, from Rotterdam to London last autumn. To mark

this move, the duo launched four of their recent designs at the London Design Festival: 'To Gather', a modular sofa; the 'Wonky' chair, in five slightly different designs; 'Raising Lanterns', a series of dramatic oversize lights, and 'Along These Lines', a graphic felt wall hanging. Here, they describe their approach.

### WHY LONDON?

**Bart** We're fascinated by this vast city with its variety of characters and its immense buzz. In Europe, London is on its way to being the main stage for design, so it's the natural choice for us.

### WHAT LONDON BUILDINGS DO YOU FIND INSPIRING?

**Patrick** I love Tate Modern, particularly the Rothko room; I love that there's a place so serene and quiet in the middle of the city.

**B** Sir John Soane's Museum is a fascinating freeze-frame, and the Nash architecture connecting Regent's Park to the Mall is a brilliant example of high-quality planning and architecture.

### WHICH BRITISH DESIGNERS DO YOU ADMIRE?

**P** Vivienne Westwood is brilliantly quirky, and I have always found the

broad vision and wealth of ideas in Cedric Price's designs very inspiring.

**B** Jasper Morrison makes simple but beautiful forms, and I think David Chipperfield is one of the best architects working at present.

### HOW DO YOU APPROACH CREATING A NEW DESIGN?

**B** With every architectural project, we find we always need something - a piece of furniture we can't find - so we make it ourselves. Within our current work, this cross-fertilisation is evident in every piece.

**P** We have an architectural approach, but with a lyrical twist. We love the theme of nature, and use drawings to give our designs a new dimension. A lot of our designs start out quite basic, but by adding a story with patterns or drawings, it gets tactile and lyrical. We

believe in crafting by hand - the physical relationship between what we're making and what we're thinking.

**B** Our designs are interchangeable; you can build with them. We're more concerned with making spaces than with making pieces of furniture.

### WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR FURNITURE DESIGNS?

**P** The lamps were originally designed as a room divider for a client; the idea is that you can't tell which are pendants and which are floor lamps. The 'To Gather' sofa system is arranged so that people can face each other when sitting. This arrangement is better for talking to people, and you can play with it.

**B** The chairs are very strong in their appearance but the upholstery is very tactile. Similarly, the wall hanging

looks abstract, but when you approach it you notice that it's felt and you want to touch it. It looks good, but it does a lot more than looking good.

### WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?

**B** We're currently working on an 1,800-square-metre villa in Holland - the architecture, interiors and furniture - and for Studio Lawrence, we plan to launch a 'Wonky' table later in the year.

**P** We're also busy designing porcelain now. We've been studying it for a couple of years and we've made a lot of sketches. We've a lot of ideas that we want to turn into products.

[www.studiolawrence.com](http://www.studiolawrence.com) >

Studio Lawrence (right) are design duo Patrick de Louwere (left of picture) and Bart Eijking. Their designs include (above, clockwise from left) the 'To Gather' sofa system, 'Raising Lantern' lights, 'Along These Lines' hanging and 'Wonky' chair

