France and Japan's design aesthetics on show at two exhibitions

Left: Quake by Antoine Phelouzat. Right: Cafe Chair by Shimoichi Mokkousha Ichi. They may be geographically and culturally apart, but France and Japan are united by their shared standards of high quality and balance of form in their approach to design. And if you’re keen to know how they do it, two ongoing exhibitions will show you.

NO TASTE FOR BAD TASTE, so Starck, so Bouroullec... so le French Design is a roll call of over 40 works by design masters such as Philippe Starck and siblings Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec.

Created by Le France Design by Valorisation de l’Innovation dans l’Aménagement (Promotion of Innovation in Furniture Design), the travelling exhibition made its debut in 2017. Its Singapore visit is part of Voilah! France Singapore Festival.
"NO TASTE FOR BAD TASTE, so Starck, so Bouroullec... so le French Design is now on at the National Design Centre.

The show is divided into 10 French design values, including heritage, audacity, and art de vivre, which Jean-Paul Bath, director general of VIA, says “are universal values are shared by designers all around the world. and easily understood by everyone.”

While the French exhibition comprises a mix of furniture and accessories using different materials, INTO THE WOODS: Yoshino Wood from Nara, showcases the beauty of Japan’s Yoshino cedar and cypress woods.

Presented by Nara Prefectural Government, Okuyamato Migration and Exchange Promotion Office, it spotlights 11 Japanese makers who represent the culture, craftsmanship and sustainability of the forestry industry in Yoshino.

Hiroaki Fukuno, deputy director general, regional development department, Nara Prefectural Government, says it’s a good way to introduce Singaporeans to Yoshino wood, known for its colour, scent and resistance to mold. And of course, quintessential Japanese handiwork.

Some exhibition highlights:

At NO TASTE FOR BAD TASTE, so Starck, so Bouroullec... so le French Design
This sculptural piece is named after the pine trees grown in the gardens of Villa Borghese in Rome. The wool-covered cushioned seats resemble the leaves, supported by a steel 'tree branch' framework. The Borghese Sofa was designed for La Chance.

In 2014, Philippe Starck and Moustache Bikes unveiled a collection of electric bikes called M.A.S.S. - Mud Asphalt Sand Snow. As the name suggests, they are all-terrain bikes, even in snow. It even has a synthetic fur frame cover to protect the battery from extreme temperatures.

*NO TASTE FOR BAD TASTE, so Starck, so Bouroullec... so le French Design is on till Nov 16, at the National Design Centre, Atrium and Designing Gallery 1.*