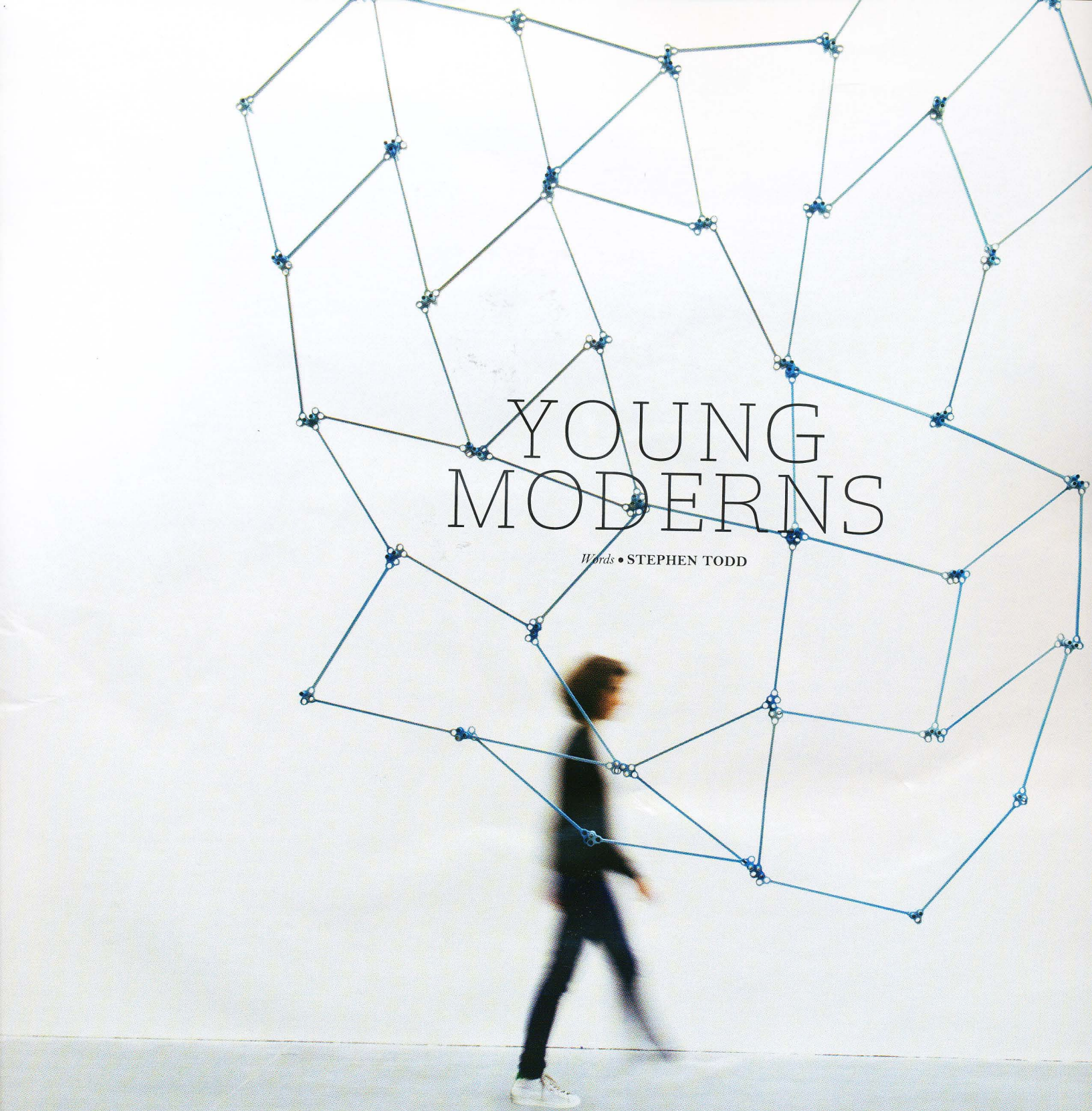
A man with dark hair, wearing a white chef's coat, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is holding a dead kangaroo against his chest. The kangaroo's head is turned towards the right, and its body is draped over the man's shoulder. The background is a dark, textured grey.

**HUNTER
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**RISE OF THE REGIONAL
RESTAURANT**





YOUNG MODERNS

Words • STEPHEN TODD

Les frères Bouroullec have reset the agenda for design in the 21st century – and brands like Ikea are taking

Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec are designers of their time. With so many objects shouting for our attention, the creations of these French brothers – furniture, lighting and objects for brands such as Cappellini, Magis, Artek, Vitra – quietly assert their authority. In an era of mindfulness, they may not be the pieces you first notice in a room but in all likelihood they'll be the ones you won't forget.

Their 2015 Belleville chair, for instance, takes its cues from classic Parisian bistro furniture, but the continuous, sinuous line

of its polyamide frame and elegantly tapered plywood seat make it a thoroughly modern proposition. Likewise, their Kaari range of shelves, desks and tables for Artek is a coherent, respectful addition to the catalogue established by Alvar Aalto in 1935.

The Bouroullecs' particular skill is an ability to extract the very essence of an object and configure it in just the right way for now. Their touch is light, their thought processes intense. They use words such as "diligence", "balance" and "refinement" in referring to their work.

"We strive for a certain délicatesse but it has absolutely nothing to do with minimalism," Ronan tells *The Australian Financial Review Magazine*.

Les frères Bouroullec, as they are known, were born in the town of Quimper in the French region of Brittany – Ronan in 1971, Erwan five years later. After graduating from the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs, Ronan set up a small studio assisted by Erwan, who was still a student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Cergy-Pontoise. Soon enough the pair's personalities coalesced to

become the Bouroullecs. They are a force to be reckoned with in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Pompidou in Paris, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam.

Bouroullec produced a series of incarnations of an elegant chair, the Cuisine Désintégrée, at the Paris Salon du Meuble in 2011. The imagination of the pair has been simultaneously lauded and

Left: One of 17 screens from the Rennes installation that redefine the typical room divider.

Below: The 2015 Belleville chair in polyamide takes its cue from classic Parisian bistro furniture.



A piece of design history, then. But more than that, this mobile, modular, open-ended structure can be seen as the precursor of what Ikea last year launched as its Concept Kitchen 2025 – a nomadic system that can be configured according to need and will make the discrete space known as a “kitchen” obsolete. Developers take note.

Similarly disruptive, the Bourouillecs’ flat-pack Can sofa for Danish brand Hay resets the agenda for lightweight, low-cost, easily transportable furniture that is good looking and enduring. Launched this year in Milan, its canvas-like fabric panels are stretched across a simple tubular steel framework, plump cushions supported by webbing straps. No Allen key needed.

“Simple, relaxed and for everyone,” Ronan says. “Our generation moves from place to place, and we try to address this with practical, flexible solutions.”

Despite the industrial scale of their production, the Bourouillecs’ oeuvre is often based on the organic. Their 2009 Vegetal chair for Vitra can be read as a reappraisal of Hector Guimard’s iconic Art Nouveau Metro station entrances from the turn of last

century. Created by state-of-the-art injection moulding, Vegetal is one of the most copied seats of the past half-decade. Organic, too, are their vine-like Aim suspension lights for Flos, with polycarbonate and die-cast aluminium pods linked by dangling flex.

What’s most intriguing with the Bourouillecs is the way they consider not just the object but the environment in which the object will reside – as if the thing itself has the power to

reconfigure its surroundings.

You see it in their Cloud room divider system for Kvadrat, a modular system of textile pieces held together by elastic bands. Free-standing or suspended, the Cloud can grow organically to any desired dimension.

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It’s also apparent in their installation in the Breton capital, Rennes. Called 17 Screens, it consists of what we might loosely describe as room dividers if they didn’t push that genre to the max. The result of more than 12 months’ research and development, the Screens are variously expressed in glass, aluminium, ceramic and even wooden twigs linked together by 3D-printed joints. Like the Aim lights, they drape in space, redefining the way we negotiate a room. ●



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