

DESIGN MAKERS

Three specialist craft studios in Singapore are taking ordinary materials to the next level through experimentation and innovation.

TEXT YVONNE XU PHOTOGRAPHY JUSTIN LOH (UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

CONCRETE EVERYTHING

Alvin Chan, Founder



As an industrial designer, Alvin Chan is accustomed to applied, hands-on work; as a part-time lecturer at School of Technology for the Arts at Republic Polytechnic, teaching becomes second nature. These professional qualities set him up perfectly to run Concrete Everything, a craft studio offering products and workshops that explore materials such as concrete, resin and jesmonite.

Concrete Everything started in 2014 as a hobby and side gig focused on the retail of concrete objects Alvin had made outside of work hours as an industrial designer. It became a full-time pursuit for Alvin last year as he sought to balance work and family responsibilities.

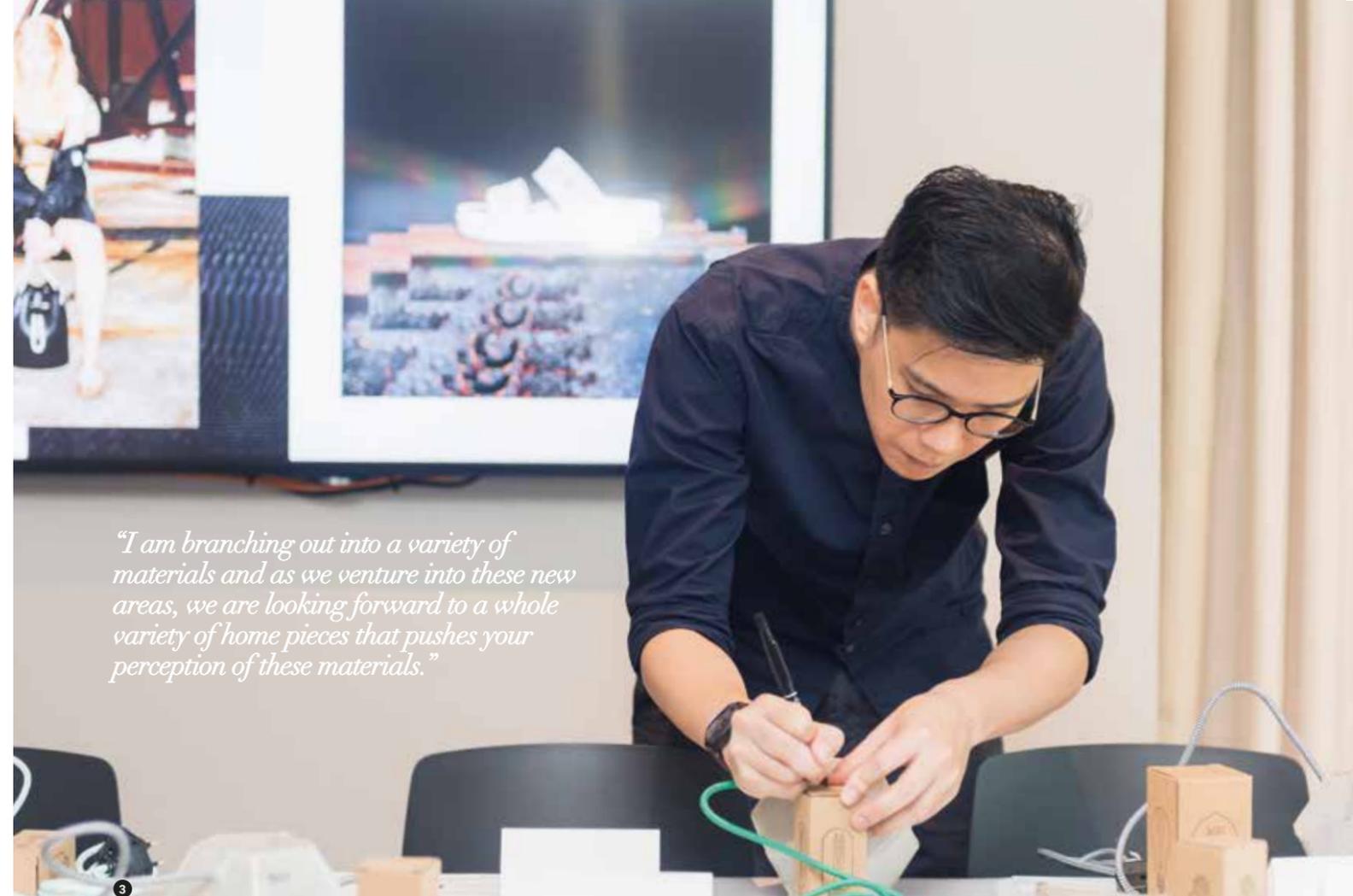
The business has also evolved from being a concrete-focused studio to one interested in materials research. Says Alvin, "I am exploring a variety of materials and marry different ones to create pieces that are visually engaging and thought provoking. I think the nature of what we do is all about pushing boundaries and giving people a different perspective as to what a material can be made into. I am branching out into a variety of materials such as resin and jesmonite; the latter has a beautiful terrazzo effect. We are looking forward to a whole variety of home pieces

that pushes people's perception of these materials."

Encouraging experimentation, Alvin adds, "Resin, jesmonite and concrete are all just materials; what you can make is really up to your imagination. Traditional concrete is used to make buildings but we are making holders, lamps and stools out of it. The same can be said for resin — traditionally a coating element for boats and used in industrial applications, we use it to make coasters, jewellery, et cetera. Jesmonite is traditionally used to make sculptures, but we are exploring its use and because it is a pricey material, we are starting to make smaller things like coasters and holders."

While attending a workshop may mean a visit to Alvin's home, and meeting his wife and two children, Ernest and Lauren, Alvin shares that Concrete Everything also runs corporate workshops and has been conducting them at co-working space The Hive. "We started running our bi-monthly workshops there for a better environment as well as to have a space that is insta-friendly. This is important for people — to document their crafts with beautiful pictures," Alvin concludes.

www.concrete-everything.com



"I am branching out into a variety of materials and as we venture into these new areas, we are looking forward to a whole variety of home pieces that pushes your perception of these materials."



1. Alvin runs a workshop for shoe company Melissa.
2. A post-event display of concrete lamps.
3. Alvin fixes the details of an event.
4. A stationary holder cast from an origami-inspired mould.
5. A workshop participant mixes concrete.
6. A resin and concrete lamp that explores the marrying of the two materials.
7. A workshop participant pours concrete into a mould formed from corrugated plastic.

Images courtesy of Concrete Everything