

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

# STYLE

## OUT OF THIS WORLD

JOHN ARLIDGE

In the blissed-out California sunshine, the glistening glass and steel curves of 1 Infinite Loop seem to sweep you up off the pavement and into the future. But the bleached-white sidewalk outside Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, an hour's drive south of San Francisco, is about as close as most people get to the most valuable company of the high-tech age. Apple is as closed to outsiders as its impenetrable software, but today we're going inside and it's all thanks to an Englishman with a spacesuit.

Jony Ive, Apple's chief designer, is admiring a 1990 Russian cosmonaut's suit. "Most products are developed by people who just do not care. Look at phones before the iPhone. But compromise, lack of care, is not possible with a spacesuit," he says. "It has to work, to be perfect. Failure would be catastrophic. You have to take the time, to give a damn about something like this."

Ive likes the spacesuit so much, he would like to own it, but he can't. It's not his. Terence Conran, who bought it for an exhibition at the Design Museum in London, has donated it to him for an auction at Sotheby's in New York in November. Ive, the most celebrated designer of our era, who styled the iMac, iPod, iPhone and iPad and Apple's new iOS7 operating system, has teamed up with his best friend and fellow designer, the Australian Marc Newson, to put together a collection of their favourite "stuff" for the auction. "These are the objects we would really like to own ourselves," says Ive.

The curated collection of iconic and inspiring objects will be sold, with the proceeds going to Red — or (RED) as the

logo has it — the charity set up by U2's Bono to conquer Aids. Some have been donated by friends and some Ive and Newson have customised. The pair have also created two new bespoke items, based on classics they love: a Leica camera and an aluminium desk.

Newson's favourite piece is a pink ruffle couture gown by Azzedine Alaïa. "The guy is the greatest living couturier," he says, between gulps of full-fat Coke to fend off jet lag (he has just flown in from London). "I said to him, 'We need something red', and he was like, 'Yeah, no problem.' He came back with something pink. So I guess it's red with a lot of white."

White is a big deal at Apple. Virtually every surface inside 1 Infinite Loop is white. The only black accents are the spooky, beyond-the-grave quotes on the walls from Steve Jobs, Apple's cofounder. They're all slightly different, but they all say the same thing: "When you've done something you think is good,

don't dwell on it. In fact, don't even think it's good. Just resolve to do the next thing better." Big Steve is watching you...

Ive, 46, looks perfectly at home in these sharp-cut, clean surroundings. His face is all smooth lines, his hair shaven, his eyes like polished glass. Behind them is the complicated software of his mind, honed to deliver the laser-sharp simplicity of thought you find in all Apple products.

Newson, 49, is shaggier, with a salt'n'mahogany mane. He loves bold hues in his clothes and his work: his luggage for Samsonite was sherbet yellow and his concept car for Ford was Tango orange. He looks like he hates Apple's sanatorium chic. So how did Ive, who hails from Chingford, Essex, and Newson, who

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Christy  
Turlington  
models a one-off  
Azzedine Alaïa  
dress for the  
(RED) auction.  
The Russian  
spacesuit has  
been donated by  
Terence Conran

was born in Sydney, come to collaborate? "Bono asked us," Ive deadpans in his boyish tones that are still much more "Lahndahn" than West Coast America.

Ive has always been a designer and maker. As a child, he used to dismantle radios and try to put them back together again. He studied product design at Newcastle Polytechnic, after which he joined a small London design consultancy called Tangerine. In 1992, a then-struggling Apple hired Tangerine to come up with ideas for the emerging portable computer market. Ive flew to Cupertino to present a new-look laptop that became the iBook. The firm liked it so much, they offered him a job on the spot and he has been there ever since.

A few years later, Ive met Newson in London and the pair have been close friends ever since. They go on holiday together, often to London, with their wives and children. "Jony takes a lovely suite at Claridges," Newson teases.

The pair are perfect collaborators because they share the same philosophy. They hate 99% of consumer products, so they design new ones. Not



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the same old things dressed up to look new, but things that are radically new, things we could not have imagined before, but when we see them we want them at once.

Ive has single-handedly banished the bland, beige, boxy PC from our desks. Every computer these days wants to be as sleek and sexy as a Mac. He has gone on to transform phones, personal stereos

and handheld computers. His work is so powerful, he has not only minted the design cues of a generation, he has helped to up-end entire industries — ask anyone who works in newspapers or the music business.

Newson's trademark bold colours and sinuous curves have been ripped off everywhere from nightclubs to "trendy" building societies. His modern interiors for Qantas have sent rival airlines into a tailspin. Small wonder each man is called a "pop-star designer", although each hates the label "because it sounds slightly demeaning", says Newson. "But don't tell Bono that."





Marc Newson,  
left, and Jony Ive

Their personal lives and characters are uncannily similar. Both are married to English women — the London-based stylist Charlotte Stockdale in Newson's case, and Heather Pegg, a historian and writer, for Ive. Both have two children. Both work away from their home countries. Both are fiercely critical of their own work. Both swear a lot, and both like face furniture — stubble and beards — as much as real furniture.

They are so alike, in fact, they both turn up in the cell-like white meeting room, in which Apple execs like to meet non-cult members, wearing exactly the same clothes: white trousers, blue T-shirt and casual leather lace-ups. They're both carrying iPhones and wearing the same watch, a custom reissued Jaeger-LeCoultre Memovox. "Oh no! That's funny," says Ive, blushing.

Although their friendship spans 20 years, the two had never worked together before the auction. How did the collaboration go? Any "creative abrasion", as they like to say in Silicon Valley? "Marc is really bad at picking up the phone. He never answers," Ive complains. "Jony works too hard. He does not skive off enough, like me," Newson counters.

Ive interrupts his friend before he can list any more of his faults. "We both have uncannily similar taste. Marc sees things that he knows that I'll love, and vice versa." Newson nods, saying: "Charlotte really struggles to buy me presents, but Jony can nail it in a heartbeat. He buys me a knife or something similar that I've been lusting after. Charlotte wouldn't have a clue, because it's not what she's interested in."

What really makes the two work well together is that they are both more interested in making stuff than designing stuff. "We want to know what things are for, how they work, what they can or should be made of, before we even begin to think what they should look like," Newson says.

They share a love of simplicity, which is best illustrated in the bespoke Leica Digital Rangefinder camera they have made for the auction. It has the minimum number of buttons, lumps and bumps — not even a "hot shoe" bracket on top to mount a flash. "People think simplicity is the absence of clutter, but that's not the case," says Ive. "Something that is truly simple communicates what it is in a very direct way. This is such a camera, such a Leica."

A well-designed object, they continue, has integrity. That's why the only car in the collection is a Range Rover, with red accents in the metal exterior and leather interior. "The Range Rover is one of

## RED HOT DESIGN

GET READY TO BID  
AT THE AUCTION...



### PINK RUFFLE COUTURE DRESS BY AZZEDINE ALAÏA

'This dress embodies the couturier's perfect marriage of art, creativity and craftsmanship,' says Newson



### TAKASHI MURAKAMI MARILYN TRUNK

Designed by Takashi Murakami for a museum retrospective, the Louis Vuitton Marilyn trunk houses 33 exotic-skin Murakami bags, one for each of the colours of the Monogram Multicolour Canvas



### JAEGER-LECOULTRE WATCH

Ive and Newson have created a bespoke Memovox. 'There was only supposed to be one, but we liked it so much, we made another two for ourselves,' says Newson

### GEORGE CLEVERLEY CUSTOM-MADE SHOES

Ive is a customer, so who else would he approach to handcraft a pair of shoes for the auction? 'The passion Jony has for Red is the same we put into our handmade shoes, which we have been making for more than 100 years,' says George Glasgow, CEO of George Cleverley



### STEINWAY (RED) PARLOR GRAND PIANO

This unique Steinway piano has been customised with a red interior. If Elton John doesn't buy this, there's something wrong

### LEICA DIGITAL RANGEFINDER CAMERA

'We loved the collaboration,' says Andreas Kaufman, chairman of Leica. 'Jony and Marc's design sets a new standard in modern photography'



### APPLE EARPODS

A one-of-a-kind pair in solid rose gold. 'Does anyone need these?' asks Newson. 'Well, you could say that about many of the objects in this auction, but these are pretty, you know'

### RANGE ROVER

Gerry McGovern, Land Rover's design chief, collaborated with Ive and Newson on the Red Range Rover, which has red accents, red brake callipers and the designers' names engraved on the interior door sills. 'We didn't want an overt statement,' he says. 'It was born out of subtlety'



the few cars that has stayed true to its essence. Tough and boxy, but luxurious, haughty, regal, British," says Newson. "Most cars are designed by committee. There aren't many good-looking ones out there. It's inexcusable."

If you are the kind of designer who — literally — shapes the future, you earn plenty of plaudits as well as a profane amount of money. Newson still holds the record for the most valuable piece sold at auction by a living designer — £1m for his Lockheed Lounge chair. Ive is described as the world's highest-paid industrial designer.

However, the pair are remarkably ego-free. Ive insists that everyone calls him Jony, not Jonathan, in a genuine, not a falsely modest, way. Newson is Marc to everyone — he's too Australian for anything else. Both seem rather uncomfortable in the limelight; they'd rather be in the studio. But they will be in New York in November looking, well, like the two men who have the coolest jobs in the world at the coolest auction in the world.

Or will they? All too often charity fundraisers descend into ostentatious displays of wealth by people with more money than taste. Who can forget

Philip Green, the BHS boss, paying £60,000 for a kiss from Kate Moss at a good-causes bash? Isn't there something naff about a "charidee" auction in a fancy New York saleroom?

"I know what you mean," Ive admits. Newson agrees: "I get asked to do things for charity all the time, and I say no for that very reason." What makes Red different? "We both know people who have died of Aids," says Newson. "But, you know, even if this wasn't for Red, it works as a body of work in itself, as a survey of important objects in the world of design."

By now, however, you're probably all fed up with waiting for the answer to the most important question anyone reading this article wants to ask. What colour iPhone does the man who designed it carry? Ive's iPhone 5S is... white. ♦

*The (RED) Auction, curated by Jony Ive and Marc Newson, will be held at Sotheby's New York on November 23 at 7pm. For details of the auction, visit [sothebys.com/RED](http://sothebys.com/RED). Highlights from the auction will be on view at Sotheby's London, October 12-20*