



# WOODCRAFT

## CITIZEN: Citizen – A Homeland for Witty Art and Design

Written by Jennifer Appenrodt

The only thing Philip Wood took from his mother's home when she died was, fittingly, a block of wood. His mother, a tailor, used the woodblock as a board to iron her hand-stitched clothing creations. To Wood, the well-worn block symbolized the quality and precision of his mother's work, which her loyal clients loved.

In 2004, Wood, 39, spun this legacy of craftsmanship into CITIZEN: Citizen — a creative dervish of a company that dabbles in art, design, and fashion. From furniture to books, sex objects to jewelry, Wood scouts projects around the world and makes them a handcrafted reality. "By gathering together disparately located creatives and their work, we're creating a platform for unique ideas to exist," he says. "We're a hothouse for exquisite flowers."

Merging sublime detail with a tongue-in-cheek sensibility, CITIZEN: Citizen's most popular works to

**Cokespoon 01**, (2005)  
created by  
**JuSt Another Rich Kid**  
and **Tobias Wong**



**Shoplifter Tote Bag** (2006)  
by **CITIZEN:citizen**



date have been a gold-plated replica of a Bic pen cap, titled "Coke Spoon 01," and a bag emblazoned with the word "Shoplifter." Recently, Wood teamed up with Canadian artist Tobias Wong to create The "Ballistic Rose" pin, which is on permanent display in New York's MoMA. Made from the same material as a bulletproof vest, the brooch is to be worn over the heart for protection during times of conflict, figuratively and literally. To create the perfect rose, Wood commissioned an artisan with a background in weaving silk flowers, a lost art she learned from her mother while growing up in Mexico. She took one strip of the tough, nylon material and twisted, pinned, and folded it onto itself until it formed a robust rose.

Though Wood considers himself "a curator and marketer of finely-made objects", those he works with consider him far more than that. "He's much more actively a

finesse with fine objects frequently resonates with first-time viewers. "I remember the first time I came across CITIZEN: Citizen's works at ICFF in New York," says Andrew Wagner, editor-in chief of *American Craft Magazine*. "I was immediately struck by the balance it achieved between humor and intelligence. The pieces, all beautifully made, never took themselves too seriously despite the serious nature of their workmanship and design." A CITIZEN: Citizen object on display in the SFMOMA might also be spotted on someone strolling down Haight Street.

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designer, artist, and creative in his own right than this title might lead one to believe," said Jimmyjane proprietor Ethan Imboden, who worked with Wood on his 24k gold vibrator inscribed with the slogan "Fuck Design". Industrial designer Joe Gibbia, who partnered with Wood on another project, agreed that Wood brings uncommon sensibilities to his work.

"He is able to see beneath the material surface into a level of meaning and emotional aesthetic others don't care to go," said Gibbia, whose project, "Untitled," transformed a series of blank pre-production book drafts into limited-edition art objects.

In his San Francisco Mission District office, Wood receives about 2-3 submissions weekly from around the world. He said he searches for objects that are thought provoking in their personal and cultural reflections. "I'm often asked how I determine whether an object should be included in our collection," Wood said. "It's difficult because it's really a gut reaction ... but it's usually got an open-ended commentary on itself or the world and has a bit of humor."

Art advisors, private clients, and museums collect the limited-edition objects, although it doesn't take a seasoned eye to recognize the quality of Wood's work. His

Wood's craftwork extends throughout the company. CITIZEN: Citizen's logo plays with context — citizens are afforded different rights depending on their country — and the idea that the presentation of things or words changes one's understanding. His website, which won a Webby for its inventive design, allows users to work within a conventional or non-linear online space. Another example can be found in his business card, which provides contact information on one side, and card stats on the other: "160 pound, ultra-white, smooth, uncoated cover ... this object is imbued with a desire to engender contact, remembrance, and perceived value."

CITIZEN: Citizen's work is sold at fifty specialist retailers across the country, ranging from Maxfields in Los Angeles to Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. Wood's currently scouting locations for boutiques in cities around the world, and he's also launching an online pop-up store, a six-month, one-stop-shopping experience for all CITIZEN: Citizen objects.

"Traditional retail spaces are not the best place to fully grasp the concept behind these objects," Wood said. "I'm constantly searching for a way to present them so they can be understood and engaged to their utmost potential."

Find a homeland at [www.citizen-citizen.com](http://www.citizen-citizen.com)