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**TBWA\HAKUHODO designs genderless and inclusive chopsticks for couples  
 “The Perfect Pair” to undo cultural stereotypes and celebrate diversity in love and marriage**



TBWA\HAKUHODO has designed a genderless chopsticks set called "The Perfect Pair" to celebrate diversity in love and marriage. "The Perfect Pair" are handcrafted chopsticks made for marrying couples that disregard the gender of either party. It is a disruption of the traditional celebratory items for marrying men and women called "*Me-Oto-Bashi*" (Literally: "husband" and "wife" chopsticks) which have for centuries designated a "manly" design (longer, black) for men, and "womanly" design (shorter, red) for women. To undo these cultural stereotypes and codes, the team of TBWA\HAKUHODO developed "The Perfect Pair" to be equal in length, width and overall look to "fit" anyone and everyone.

The genderless "The Perfect Pair" will go on sale from November 22, 2022, Japan's "Good Couple Day," on the official website of Matsukan Co., the partner company specializing in making chopsticks, and in department stores in Japan. In conjunction with the launch, TBWA\HAKUHODO is starting "The Perfect Pair Gift Project" to bring more creativity, disruption and diversity to the age-old gender stereotype-saturated "gifts for married couples" market.

TBWA\HAKUHODO will continue to update traditional cultural symbols, disrupting stereotypes, and create new products that are more inclusive and respectful towards the current times, becoming the "creative force for meaningful changes in society."

## <Thoughts behind "The Perfect Pair">

In Japan, chopsticks (*hashi*) have the meaning of "bridging (*hashi*)" happiness and marriage, and the "*Me-Oto-Bashi*" (Literally: "husband" and "wife" chopsticks) has been regarded as an auspicious gift for long time. However, traditional chopsticks set for the married couple only consisted of sets of long and short chopsticks, black and red, representing a man and a woman together. Although there are so many different forms of love, the gift that celebrates love has not been inclusive at all, representing only one form of husband and wife.

We created the "The Perfect Pair" to rectify this, the chopsticks are the same color, length, and width, with a design that fits easily in anyone's hand, the perfect gift to give to any couple. The color is neither red nor black, but white as a symbolic color of equality and peace. Chopstick craftsmen hand-painted the white color one by one and polished the surface to create a pattern on the middle layer, resulting in a one-of-a-kind design that no two chopsticks are alike. We hope that "The Perfect Pair" which is layered with the white color of happiness, will bring people who use them happiness and love in their life.

## <Characteristics of "The Perfect Pair">



### ① Genderless length and thickness

It is designed to be 22.5cm in length, which is easy to hold for both men and women. It also has a form that fits comfortably in any hand, so anyone can hold it without feeling uncomfortable.

### ② Layers upon layers of "white blessings"

The white color, which represents "purity and innocence," is layered, scraped, and painted in 22 layers. This process is all done by hand, making the design one and only in the world.

### ③ Paulownia wood box with a sense of high quality

The package is prepared in a paulownia wood box that emphasizes a sense of luxury befitting a celebration. The design is made to be memorable both when it is given and when it is received.

## <"The Perfect Pair" Official Ambassadors>



### LBIAN TV U & Re-yan

"Eating a meal with celebrated chopsticks, which are slightly different from the usual chopsticks, makes you feel special. The fact that they are called "The Perfect Pair" instead of "husband and wife" also makes it special for us. Every time I look at the

Perfect Pair chopsticks, it brings back the special and happy feeling. We would be happy if you could give "The Perfect Pair", which is perfect for celebrations, to your loved ones around you."

**【Profile】** A lesbian couple, U and Re-Yan, are a duo YouTuber and have made a number of appearances on TV or at public events, including the LGBTQ+ event Tokyo Rainbow Pride.



## ALAN&KEN

"We are very happy to be able to share our love of "eating" together with "The Perfect Pair". We hope that many people, regardless of age or gender, will share happiness with this pair of chopsticks every day."

**【Profile】** Alan is a model, and Kenta is an office worker and they are a couple. They are influencers with a total of 16K Instagram followers. They usually work independently, but this was the first time they collaborated on a photo/video shoot together.

## <"The Perfect Pair" Concept Movies>

ALAN&KEN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiZc-3BpKG0>

LBIAN TV U & Re-yan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smVTXQZRQvc>



Two couples, ambassadors Alan & Ken and U & Re-yan of LBIAN TV share their memories around the dining table. While enjoying the meal using "The Perfect Pair", they talk about what makes them happy and the moments they enjoyed, and also what made them anxious and worried, for being together. The movie is full of

happiness and love that everyone who sees it can't help but smile.

## <"The Perfect Pair Gift Project" for diversity in all types of gifts for married couples>

"The Perfect Pair" was made possible through the cooperation and warm support of many people, including craftsmen, retailers, and customers. Through the development of this product, we were able to relearn of how couple gifts are based on stereotypes of men and women, and how many people who give gifts to same-sex couples and those who are given gifts are often troubled by this situation.

With the introduction of same-sex partnership registration in Tokyo starting in November 2022, and a total of more than 150 couples having already applied for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government of their partnerships. With diverse gender identities now widely recognized, we questioned if diversity is also reflected in the gift-giving culture in Japan. Just as "The Perfect Pair" were born from "Me-Oto-Bashi

(Literally: "husband" and "wife" chopsticks)", could products made for men and women transcending industry boundaries become more diverse for people with various gender identities? From this thoughts, we launched the "The Perfect Pair Gift Project".

Thankfully, from the conceptual stage of the project, we have been receiving support from people in many different fields. In the future, we would like to create a variety of "Perfect Pair Gift Project" starting from "The Perfect Pair" chopsticks, to generate support, create opportunities for people to think and understand, and change society to be more inclusive and celebrate diversity.

**<Comment from TBWA\HAKUHODO Senior Creative Director: Nobuhiro Arai>**

"The Perfect Pair" chopsticks - as a pair of chopsticks, they may seem just ordinary chopsticks. However, when paired together, it becomes a set of chopsticks with profound meaning.

With a history of over 100 years of making chopsticks with the traditional skills of its craftsmen, Matsukan has created the new type of chopsticks that disrupts the traditional Japanese culture of "*Me-Oto-Bashi*" (Literally: "husband" and "wife" chopsticks). This is a big change that has only been possible because Matsukan has continued to support people's lifestyles.

We hope that this will be a sign that the various "traditions" that still remain in Japan will begin to change to become more inclusive.

**< TBWA\HAKUHODO Project Members>**

Senior Creative Director	Nobuhiro Arai
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Producer	Chikako Nagai
Producer	Wataru Ito
Movie Director	Shin Imai
Editor	Nobuo Mita

**About Matsukan Co.**

Founded in 1922 in Fukui Prefecture, a Wakasa lacquerware production center with a 400-year history, Matsukan celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2022. Matsukan is a chopstick maker that offers "special feeling" of using chopsticks for everyone with the theme of "Chopsticks and Life". Chopsticks that fit your lifestyle, chopsticks that add color to your dining table, and chopsticks that bring people together...Matsukan will pursue the various possibilities of chopsticks and deliver exciting chopsticks and lifestyles. <https://matsukan.com/>

**About TBWA\HAKUHODO**

TBWA\HAKUHODO is a full-service advertising agency based in Tokyo, established in 2006 as a joint venture between Hakuhodo and TBWA Worldwide Inc. With the combination of TBWA's DISRUPTION(R) methodology, a global network spanning over 100 countries/regions and Hakuhodo's in-depth knowledge of the Japanese market and longstanding reputation for trustworthiness, the agency continues to create and deliver high quality solutions to all of our clients – solutions that cause change and have the power to get noticed. <https://www.tbwahakuhodo.jp/en>