

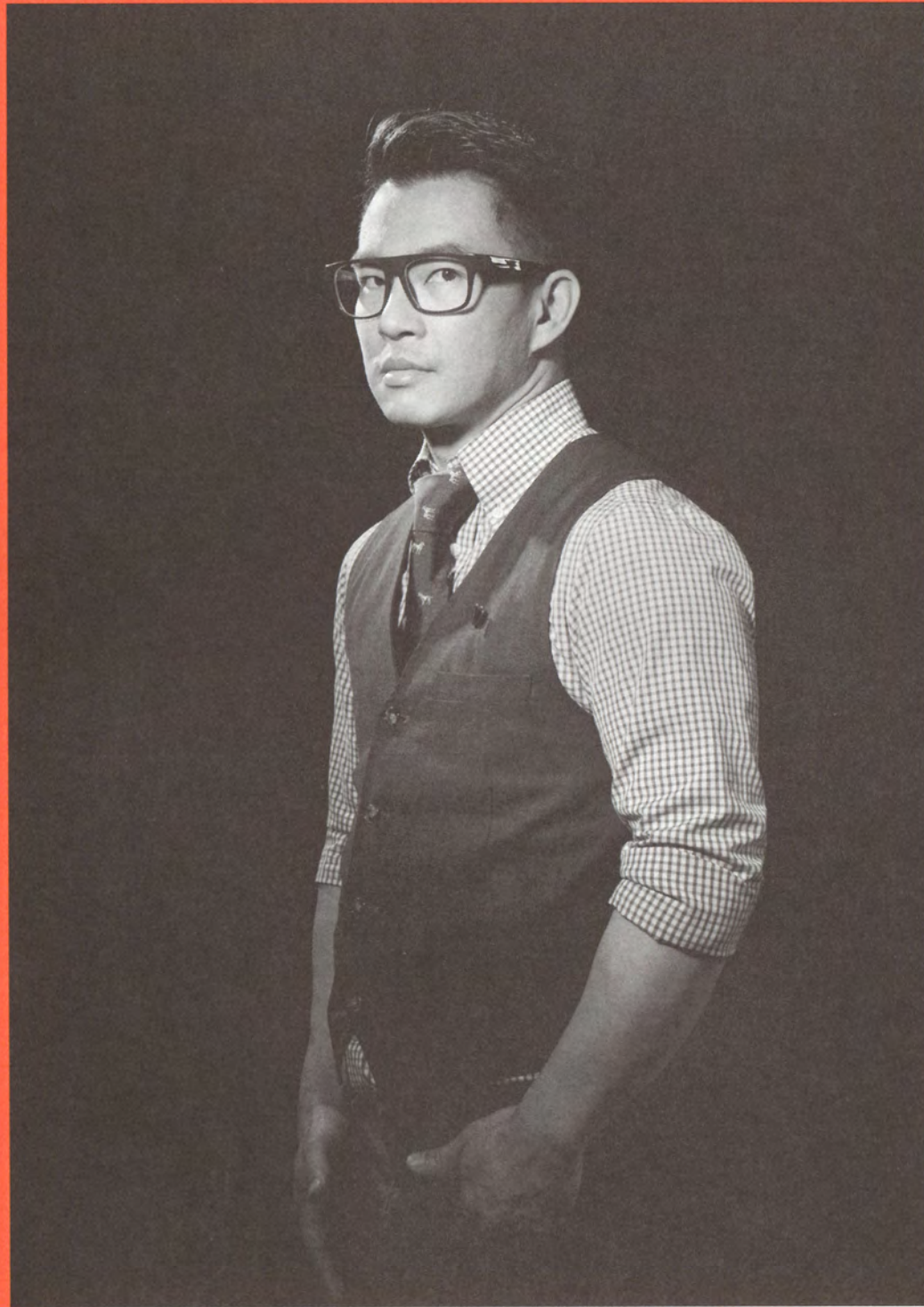
DIFFERENTIATE by DESIGN

No.3

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Insights

Pratt



GOIL AMORNVIVAT

On Top of *Top Design*

Goil Amornvivat has built his career using innovation to overcome design challenges. He demonstrates his expertise as an associate professor of interior design at Pratt, as principal at AM/MOR Architecture LLP, and since 2007, as a frequent guest on a variety of design television shows. These include being a contestant on Bravo's *Top Design* and HGTV's *White Room Challenge*, an on-screen designer on Discovery's TLC: *Trading Spaces*, and making appearances on ABC's *The View* and Bravo's *Watch What Happens with Andy Cohen*. While many designers might dream of such opportunities, Amornvivat believes it takes additional know-how to come out on top of shows like *Top Design*.

"*Top Design* creates drama by placing larger-than-life personalities in design scenarios with impossible budgets and time frames," Amornvivat explains. "The media campaign entailed building on the aspects of contestants' personalities that would emerge based on the opportunities and constraints placed on us within the context of the show. However, because most of the promotional materials were created before the filming, each contestant had to know what they were about, what their brand was."

Amornvivat's brand involves using his own larger-than-life personality to generate new ideas and energize others to do the same. Appearing on *Top Design* boosted his career and led to new projects

and clients who related to Amornvivat and valued what he and his team could accomplish under pressure. "After *Top Design*, my partner and I became 'known' designers. People stopped us in the middle of the street," he says. "The day after my 'ousted' episode aired, a stranger hugged me on the subway. But not all contestants had the same experience."

To help Pratt students learn how to use themselves to drive innovation and create a personal brand that can enhance their careers, Amornvivat developed the advanced studio "The Hunger Games—A Survival Edge: Personality, Persona, and Branding." In it, Pratt students—who had learned in previous Institute courses how to use design as a powerful means of problem solving—were challenged to look inward and consider themselves as a design problem with their own specific set of potentials and opportunities, as well as a context in which they operated. Defining their own personal brand gives students the confidence to take the risks required to develop truly innovative approaches.

Amornvivat adds, "This exercise is as useful for designers who want to join an existing practice with an established brand as it is for those who wish to establish themselves as a brand. In either case, you have to know how to communicate your mission through the entire package that is you."