YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS!
THE KITCHEN IS CLEAN AGAIN!
HELP US KEEP IT THAT WAY!
Most men spend their young adulthoods trying to get away from their parents, but for Ken Tomita of Grovemade, it’s been a different story. Tomita, 37, is the child of immigrants from Japan (they moved when Ken was a baby); his mother’s command of English remains iffy to this day. And when he was just out of high school, Tomita’s father passed away, making Tomita, the eldest of two brothers, the man of the house.

Still, through his late teens and early twenties, Tomita did the young-adult thing, trying to cut a path his own. He went to RISD. He lived in Santa Barbara. But he made regular trips home to look after his mother, and never lived outside of his hometown of Portland, Oregon, for more than a few years at a stretch.

In his late 20s, he cofounded Grovemade, which specializes in handcrafting wood and leather accessories (its first product was a bamboo iPhone case). And for a time, he allowed dual necessities—the imperative to look after his mother, and the financial pressures of launching a business—to box him into that corner every young adult dreads: living at home. From 28 to 32, Tomita lived in his childhood room, which his mother has kept just as it had been in his teenage years.

For the most part, he says, he was “cool with it,” but at the same time, “every choice has a pro and con.” As for dating, “it really does make it difficult,” he admits of living with his mother. “Definitely doesn’t look good on the surface.” For the most part, he felt lucky that, not having a mortgage, he could take bigger risks with his business and learn more.

At the same time, though, at a certain point it became too much, and as Grovemade had more success, he moved out. First he lived in a group house. Then, eventually, he got his own apartment, and a live-in girlfriend. Visits home remained the setting is ideal. “Though she’ll never admit it, she has really good taste,” says Tomita of his mother. The modern house was designed in the '70s, and the house is elegantly furnished. Tomita recently brought a member of his design team up to his mother’s for lunch. “He had an image of a ‘mom house,’” that is, a typical suburban tchotchke-filled thing. “But the reality was totally different.” Ceramic art, subdued Japanese design, and elegant displays are found throughout the home. “She has unique ways of doing things,” Tomita says.”

To flow.

dinner and a relaxing bath “a magical time” when ideas start to flow.

spends the trash out (she’s somewhat frail, and it involves carrying heavy trash up a hill). Tomita also got in the habit of visiting Sundays, and now he stays each week from Sunday until that Tuesday workday. And he loves it. Those mothering comforts that may have vexed him a few years ago are now some of his favorite parts of the week.

“The food,” he says immediately, when asked about the perks of spending nearly half each week with his aging mother. “She cooks amazing Japanese food. It’s a big deal for her when I come home. There’s always a feast: sushi, crab legs, hot pot.” After the main course, there’s tea and dessert, often a homemade cheesecake, or maybe an afogato. In the mornings, after his shower, there’s usually a smoothie waiting for him, followed, often, by a Japanese breakfast of miso soup, salmon, and rice. “Luxurious,” he calls it, with a laugh.

Other perks of Mom’s house: two friendly dogs, forest hiking trails, and a deep Japanese bathtub. And for a designer, the setting is ideal. “Though she’ll never admit it, she has really good taste,” says Tomita of his mother. The modern house was designed in the '70s, and the house is elegantly furnished. Tomita recently brought a member of his design team up to his mother’s for lunch. “He had an image of a ‘mom house,’” that is, a typical suburban tchotchke-filled thing. “But the reality was totally different.” Ceramic art, subdued Japanese design, and elegant displays are found throughout the home. “She has unique ways of figuring out how to display objects,” says Tomita.

Overall, he says of the visits home, “it feels like going on vacation. It creates a really interesting rhythm for my life.” And on those well-fed evenings surrounded by a well-designed home, Tomita has often come up with some of his best ideas for his business—including a recent bold plan to drastically slim down Grovemade and focus on the business’s core. “The vast majority of my bigger-picture thinking happens there,” he says. He calls the hours after a home-cooked dinner and a relaxing bath “a magical time” when ideas start to flow.

Sometimes he recognizes that his life is unusual, and that others might look askance at it. “Immigrant families. Sometimes we’re flipped upside-down,” he says. But sometimes being upside-down offers a new perspective, and Tomita thinks more people in business might want to try it. Their mothers, surely, will like the idea.
@themonsterlee Blood moon hunting at 4am was worth it for the company and the peeking sunrise. And the apocalyptic warlock ritual and sacrificial offering. Naturally. #lifeatuid

@rebjag Första projektet på designhögskolan klart. #lifeatuid

@flodyssey Just your average Friday with Anton chilling with mutual BFF Nikki #lifeatuid

@ausinsch Who was it...? No “ragrets”. #lifeatuid

@akansha.x Storming the brain #lifeatuid

@daanhekking 1 day left... #lifeatUID

@themonsterlee My tiny anti-jet lag Travel Companion army is ready for battle against user testers. Bring it on! #lifeatuid

@oncebjedi What’s a platform? #lifeatuid

@ezgisa Always a pleasure to see Mr. Torres the Robot maker #lifeat-teruid #lifeatuid

@rebjag Första projektet på designhögskolan klart. #lifeatuid

@joschly The mannikin is flying by light. Arrangement by Keyur. #lifeatuid

@joshly The mannikin is flying by light. Arrangement by Keyur. #lifeatuid

Share your projects, fikas and class moments with UID by sending your photos to: wozzop@gmail.com

We love hearing from you!

THE WEEK THAT WAS #LIFEATUID

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We love hearing from you!
Better Than The Supermoon, This Lamp Makes An Eclipse From A Rainbow

The next one might not be scheduled until 2033, but if Sunday’s supermoon lunar eclipse just whet your appetite, you might consider this lamp for your living room (if it is ever produced!). Its clever, simple design overlays seven multi-colored eclipses, one over the other, for the ultimate in mood lighting.

When not in use, the Eclipse of Rainbow lamp looks low-key: not so much like an Ikea lamp as the one Ikea knocked off when designing their lamp. There are two main differences: Seven LED bulbs, each positioned at a different angle, make up the lamp’s light source. Because these bulbs are shaded with a black steel hood, they emit their light directly to the base of the lamp, where it passes through an opaque plastic disc to create a pan-chromatic constellation of eclipse-like shadows throughout the room.

The Eclipse of Rainbow was designed by Greek designer Eugenia Antoniou, and its name is a fairly straightforward representation of its pedigree. Inspired by eclipses, Antoniou decided to create her lamp to see how well it could be applied to the rainbow. The result is undeniably successful, so much so that Antoniou’s lamp received an honorable mention in the Red Dot Awards this year, as well as first prize at the Ideas Design Competition at Luminaire 2014. Sadly, though, it remains a one-off, at least for now.

What’s next in 3D printing

Just like his beloved grandfather, Avi Reichental is a maker of things. The difference is, now he can use 3D printers to make almost anything, out of almost any material. Reichental tours us through the possibilities of 3D printing, for everything from printed candy to highly custom sneakers.

What_s_next_in_3d_printing

PhD FESTIVAL 'RESULTS'

Digital Heroes: Identity Construction in Iranian Video Games

This lecture analyzes contemporary Iranian video games and explores the ways in which they communicate different concepts of identity. Video games are a form of mainstream media for Iranian youth, and have become a popular leisure activity. These games provide them with various cultural symbols, myths, and rituals, which then become a constituent part of their identities. At the same time, most games on the Iranian market are developed and produced in the United States and Europe. Unsurprisingly, the Iranian authorities are particularly concerned about the negative influence of such games on Iranian youth. Therefore, they established the National Institute of Computer Games in Tehran in 2004 in order to subsidize development of games in Iran, conceived in accordance with Iranian and Islamic values. Whereas the Iranian government perceives games as a new semiotic language of the youth and therefore an element that we can reflect upon. This talk will focus on the aesthetic and social aspects of video games in Iran and the way they mirror the values and social structures of Iranian society.

What do we find on the Iranian market? How do we identify the results and start reflecting? How do you know when you have results? How do you know when you have arrived? What is/counts as a result? What do you mean by the results of a design research experiment? What do you mean by contentment? Qualities of bewilderness and contentment.

Digital Heroes: Identity Construction in Iranian Video Games

Vit Sisler
October 8 | 10:00 - 12:00 | Location: H1

Today six major colour systems dominate digital colour management: RGB, CMYK, hexadecimal, LAB, HSV and YCbCr. Given the constraints of output devices (screen displays, projectors, printers), the colour gamuts of these systems are restricted, requiring some form of algorithm to compress the perceptible or measurable spectrum into the affordances of digital devices. The most expensive of these offer little more than 50 or 60% of the range of colour perceived by human eyes, and are especially poor in the blue end of the spectrum.

Read more: http://www.humlab.umu.se/en/events/seminars#3330
Kung Fury
Tuesday, October 6, 12:15
Lecture Hall G (Hörsal G), Humanities Building

Followed by a short pub at the Staff Kitchen from 16:00

hot shower
noun
a regular shower, but with UID in it

Friday Pub!
at arts studio from 18:00
9 October 2015

Public defense
Opening Up Design
Engaging the Layperson in the Design of Everyday Products

Guido Hermans
6 October 2015 at 13.00
auditorium, Umeå Institute of Design

Followed by a short pub at the Staff Kitchen from 16:00