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STORY OF

## SHELTER FOR ALL

Studio Dror hopes its innovative building system will let people in disaster zones forgo tents and erect their own sturdy homes

BY JOSEPHINE MINUTILLO

### 1 AN ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY



"I never planned on making a new structural support system," says Dror Benschtrit. But back in 2006, while experimenting with forms in his Manhattan workshop, the Israeli designer - known for his collaborations with such upscale lines as Cappellini, Boffi and Alessi on furnishings for the living room, bath and kitchen - discovered an innovation with the potential to be much bigger. Benschtrit fit together four identically angled, L-shaped wooden slats, two facing up and two down, like pieces of a puzzle. When they were affixed to one another diagonally, the assembly opened up to form a unique, and extremely stable, geometry. Benschtrit was initially impressed with the structure's aesthetic appeal, and translated it into the design for his Floor Chandelier for Swarovski. Later he got to thinking, "What else can this geometry do?"

↳ The Swarovski chandelier's L-shaped components were supersized and translated into a weather-resistant barrier.



### 2 PUTTING IT UP

Dror has always worked in a cross-disciplinary way," Benschtrit explains. "A table becomes an idea for a house, or something large scale becomes a piece of jewellery." By linking a series of these L-shaped assemblies, Benschtrit saw possibilities for a textured wall divider. In the four years since the product's inception, the studio has quietly collaborated with manufacturers in Israel and the U.S. to realize prototypes with solid panels in wood and concrete. QuaDror's innate structural and acoustic properties have led to dozens of applications. "When we showed it to a company that makes barriers for highways," the designer recalls, "they told us you could use these bridges in the same way." More recently, they have built a shelter that can be equipped with steel I-beams to make trusses for

→ The interlocking L-shapes informed joints and I-beam trusses devised for building-scale projects.



### 3 PUTTING IT TO GOOD USE

Benschtrit unveiled his idea for QuaDror's latest iteration at the Design Indaba Expo in Cape Town. He is seeking partners to realize a QuaDror Home that can be flat packed and shipped as a full kit, or a basic one locals can combine with their own materials. Recently named a finalist in the 2011 Buckminster Fuller Challenge (the winner will be announced in June), the shelter could quickly provide permanent disaster relief housing, or replace shoddy structures in slums and favelas. "QuaDror Home is different from every other construction type, because it self-assembles and is instantly stable," says Brian Markham, a structural engineer at Arup who consulted on the project. "With this system, you can erect a single-storey building in minutes."



AZUREMAGAZINE.COM

CAN / US \$72  
JUNE 2011  
PM40049073 R02A



Azure June 2011  
QuaDror

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