

MODERN

MAGAZINE

design


architecture

decorative arts



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DESIGNED and developed by the preeminent French aeronautical engineer, Marcel Bloch, the MB 175 and its predecessor, the MB 174, were the French Air Force's most advanced and effective World War II-era airplanes.

Created circa 1939, this model was constructed at a scale of 10:1 and was used for wind tunnel experiments.

While the model's purpose was utilitarian, its handcrafted construction and extraordinary detailing elevate it from the realm of industrial design to that of fine sculpture.

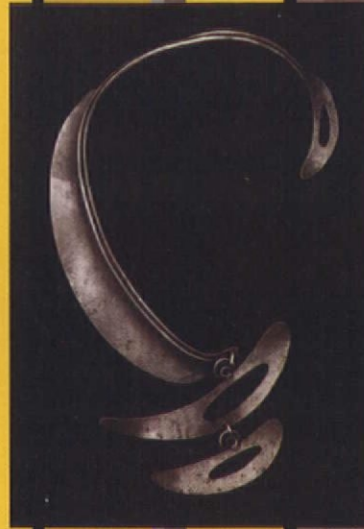
MARCEL BLOCH DASSAULT
(1892–1986)

** Model of an MB 175, c. 1939*
Walnut with tin, 70½ × 48½ in.

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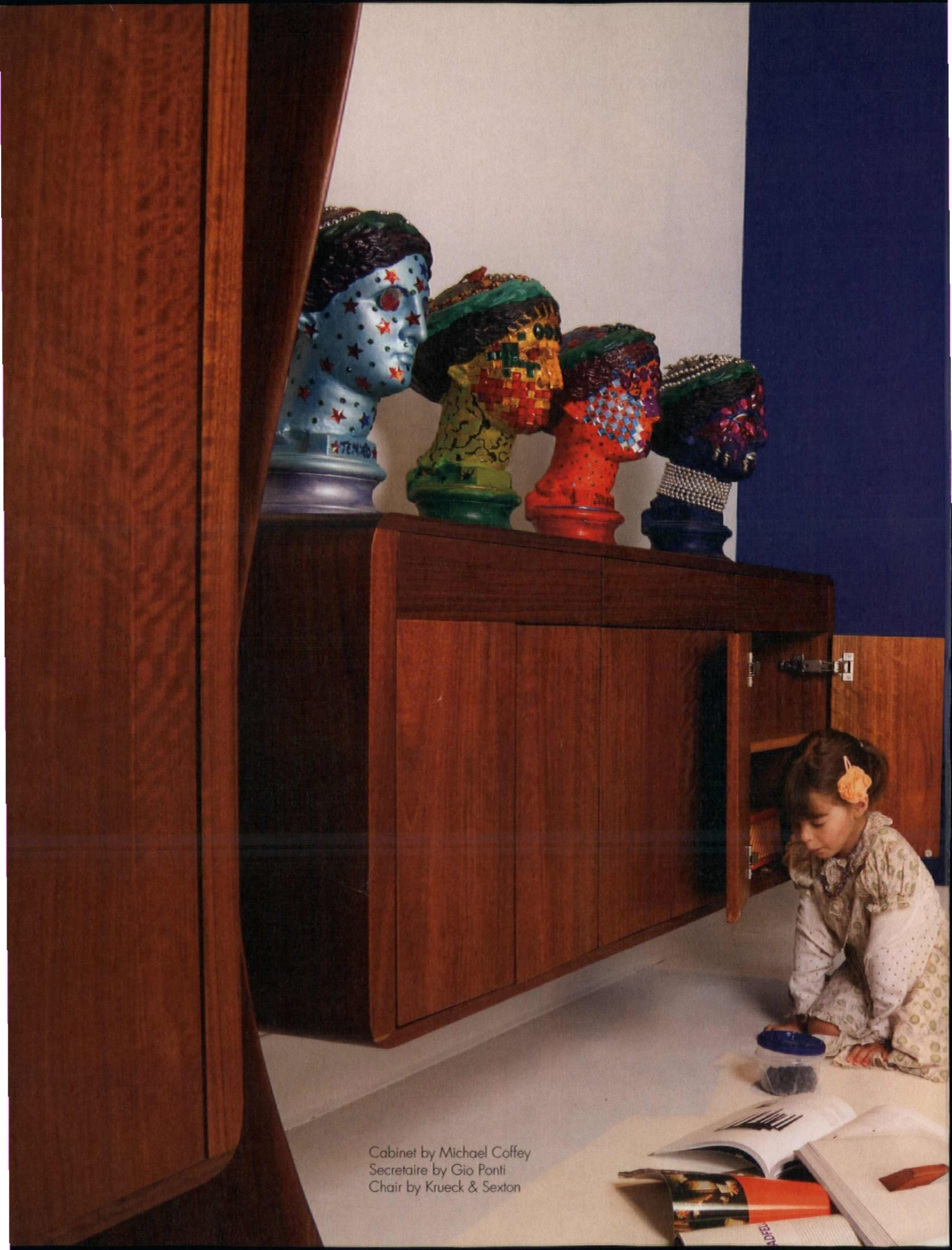
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Photo by David Sullivan

"San Martin" dining table by Joseph Walsh
From the Figure and Form series, edition of 12.
Shown in Olive-Ash wood: 29"H x 122"W x 43"D

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Rock Crystal Chandelier, Bagnès, France, circa 1930



JEAN LAMBERT-RUCKI, (1888–1967) « LES FLÂNEURS » c. 1923 - Black patinated bronze - Height: 20 in

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PARIS

Per Aspera

While the world was in the throes of the Great Depression, Gilbert Rohde transformed the Herman Miller Furniture Company from a moribund manufacturer of period reproductions into a cutting-edge maker of modernist designs. In the same years, Russel Wright began to devise the colorful ceramic dining pieces and other housewares that would reshape the aesthetics of the American lifestyle. In France, architects and designers such as Robert Mallet-Stevens, René Herbst, Le Corbusier, André Sornay, and Jean Prouvé developed their revolutionary ideas in form, materials, and function. Meanwhile, the Bauhaus continued to extend its influence on international design even as the Weimar Republic collapsed.

The approach of the Second World War swelled the exodus of design talent to the United States—an influx, mainly from Central Europe, that had begun some twenty years earlier. During the conflict, Charles and Ray Eames brought their experiments in bent plywood to bear on war materiel, designing medical stretchers and their famed leg splints for the U.S. Navy. Serving as a Seabee in the Aleutian Islands, architect Bruce Goff conceived buildings based on the engineering of the Quonset hut. At an internment camp in Idaho, a Washington state-born, M.I.T.-trained architect named George Nakashima met a master of traditional Japanese furniture making, and from him learned the joinery techniques of his ancestral home. And the end of the war prompted designs for low-cost, comfortable, attractive, and easily built modern housing for returning veterans and their families.

Other—and more recent—examples are legion, but the point is clear: in times of tumult (to borrow from William Faulkner's Nobel Prize acceptance speech) design not only survives, it prevails. Though the definition is almost quaint these days, when much design appears to be most concerned with developing a chic and novel "look," design is still at its core about the search for solutions.

Design does not need catastrophe to move forward, of course. Relaxed social mores in the '60s fostered the work of Verner Panton, Pierre Paulin, Wendell Castle, and Gaetano Pesce, to name a few. The early '80s backlash against rampant consumerism prompted designers like Tom Dixon and Ron Arad to make furniture out of garbage. The innovations of these periods can be regarded more as political statements than "solutions." What the world needs today are solutions.

Economic crisis and the certainty of a coming ecological calamity should be twin spurs to advances in design. A number of architects have shown that they can attempt altruistic housing schemes like those of the late Samuel Mockbee and still keep a well-heeled clientele. Take Los Angeles's Michael Maltzan, who has designed houses for such grandees as Michael Ovitz, yet also devotes prodigious energy to low-income housing and community service complexes. Then there is the modest, but eye-opening exhibition called "InDisposed." Launched in New York and now touring the country, "InDisposed" showcases the work of young designers who are turning throw-away items such as wire clothes hangers, egg cartons, and even old coffee grounds into useful and attractive objects.

Such examples are cheering—but they are also a reminder that you can never have too many good minds working on problems. The Roman philosopher Seneca coined the motto *Per aspera ad astra*—"Through adversity to the stars." If it's too much to ask for the stars, a cozy, striking, reasonably priced, sturdy, and eco-consciously built chair will do nicely.

Gregory Cerio
Editor



Above: Made of recycled red cedar, Kevin Patrick McCarthy's "Hansen" light collapses like a telescope for easy shipping, and can be used as either a pendant or a table lamp. It is included in the exhibition "InDisposed."



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Photographs by Ben Ritter.



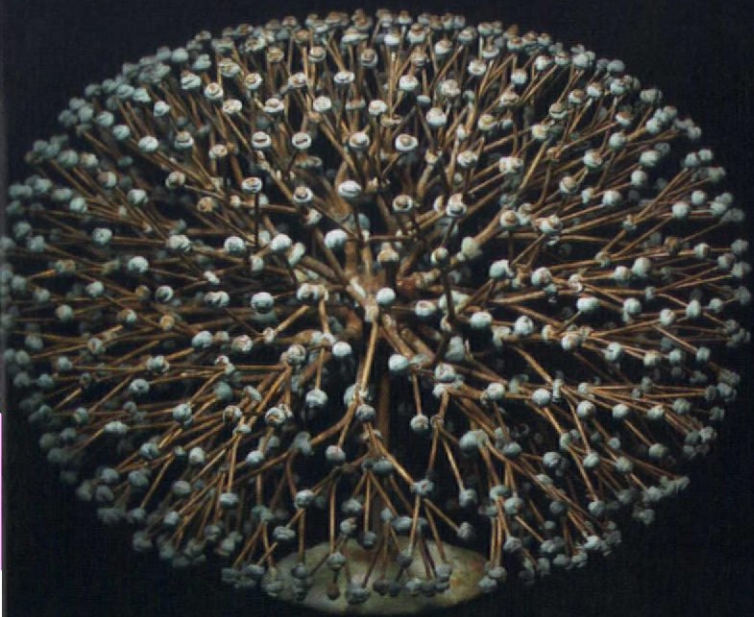
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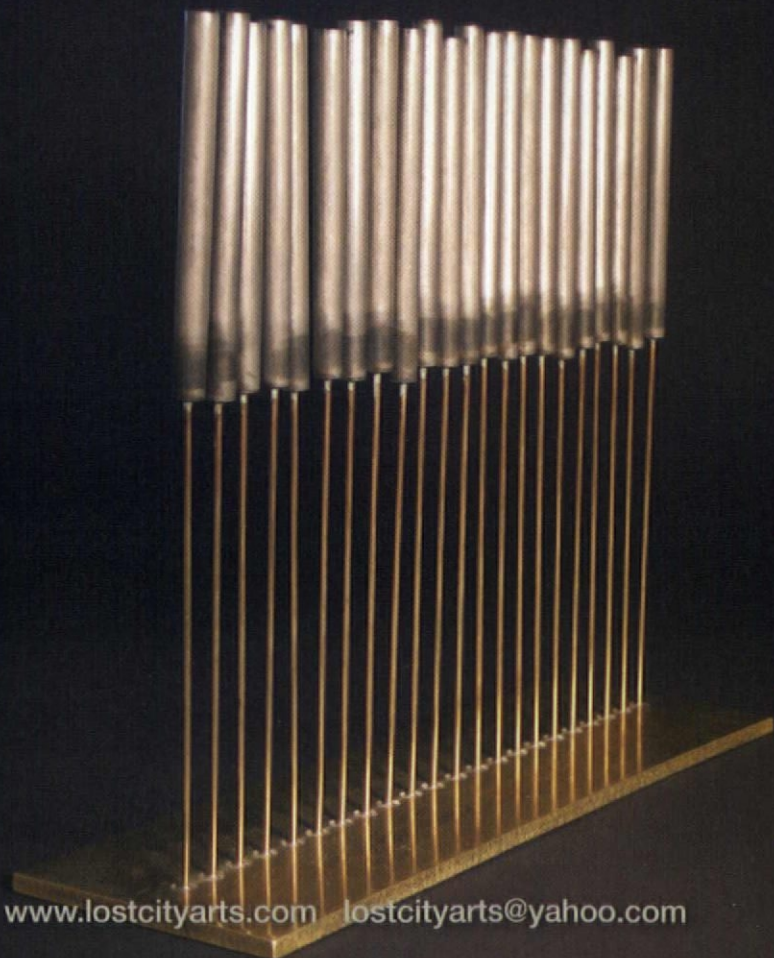
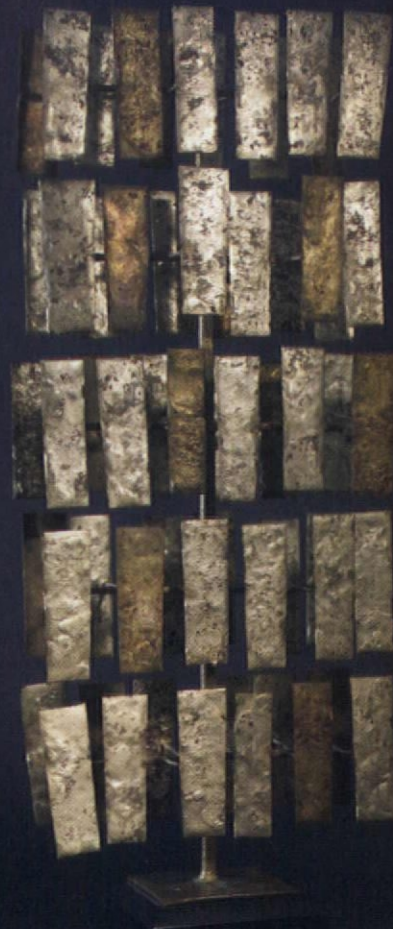
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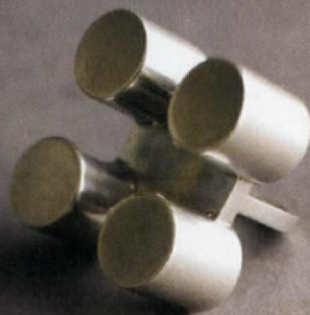
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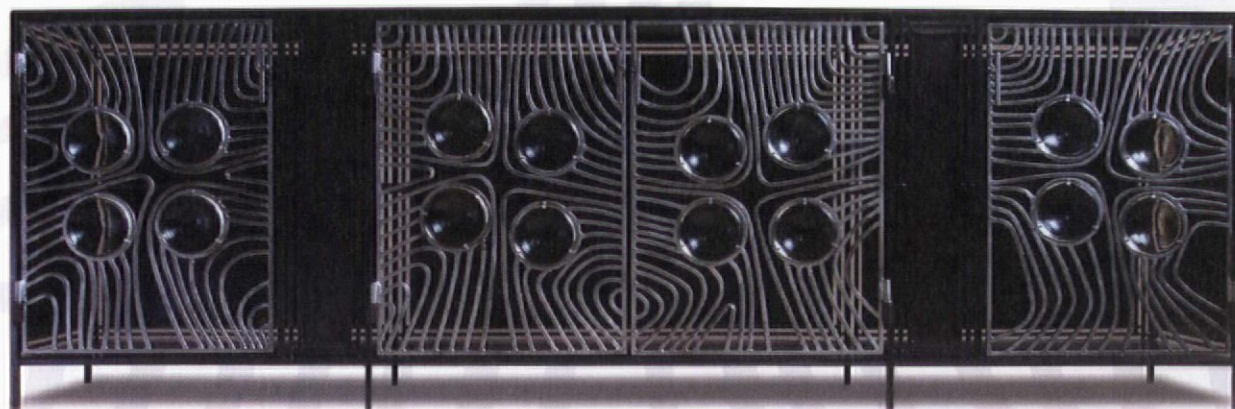
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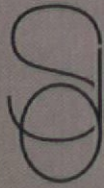
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What Sold, for How Much, and Why?

Lot 36, Sotheby's New York, June

12, 2009: A circa 1948 brass and wire chandelier by the Finnish designer **Paavo Tynell**.

The piece sold for \$59,375 off a pre-auction estimate of \$15,000 to \$20,000. Some reasons for the unexpectedly high price:

Rarity "Tynell made several of these chandeliers, but each is different," says James Zemaitis, head of Sotheby's 20th Century Design department. "The 'drop' and the number of armatures holding the mesh flowers were specified by the client." This one has two dozen armatures and measures nearly a yard in diameter. "It's easily the biggest I've seen," Zemaitis says.

Sprightly Form Andrew Kelson, owner of Baxter & Liebchen, a Scandinavian design gallery, notes that Finnish designers produced far less than their Danish peers and did more "fanciful" work. "Finnish modernism is informal," he says. "They used bright colors more often, and covered their floors in

highly patterned shag rugs. Danes were not show-offs, but Finns wouldn't shy away from a flamboyant chandelier."

Freshness to Market "This is the first Tynell chandelier I've auctioned at Sotheby's," Zemaitis says. "When something is new to our buyers, it often provokes a reaction." Bidding in the salesroom was particularly spirited. At least six bidders vied for the chandelier; two or three is the norm.

"Couture" Provenance The Tynell chandelier came from the estate of Lucia Moreira Salles, a fashion icon of the 60's. A smokey-eyed model from Brazil, she made her runway debut in 1957 and became a muse to Valentino

Garavani and Coco Chanel, and a close friend to Diane Von Furstenberg. She later retired to São Paulo and became a child-health advocate.

"Aesthetic" Provenance The chandelier came to Moreira Salles via Jacques Grange, the French interior designer. Grange has an almost god-like status for many in the design world, who consider his eye impeccable. "His imprimatur certainly made the piece a stronger draw," Zemaitis says. Grange must truly love the Tynell chandelier: he himself was the winning bidder.

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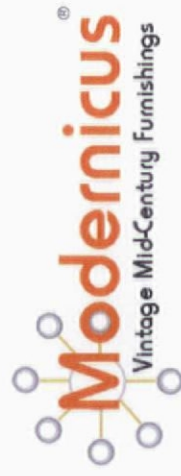
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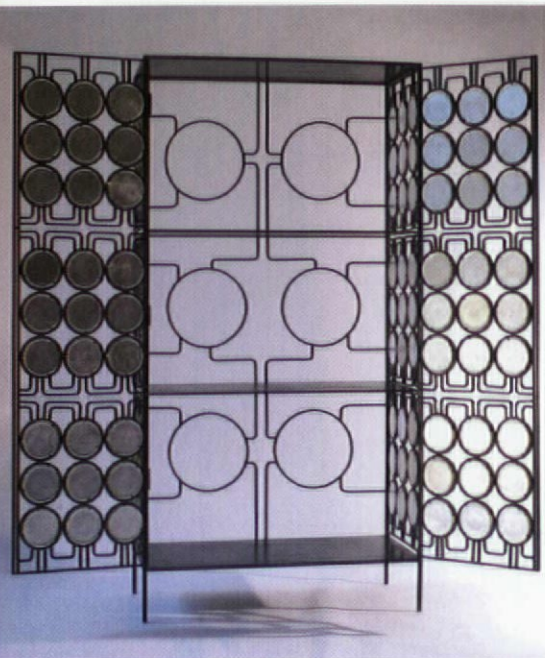
"Mole" Sofa by Sergio Rodrigues - 1957

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Mixed Media "Christophe Côme started as a sculptor working in bronze and iron, and his artistry shines through in his furniture and lighting designs. He had a wonderful touch with metal, using oxidation and other processes to create fascinating textures. In a piece like the 'Honey Silver' étagère [pictured], a piece that will be included in a Côme exhibit we are opening in November; Christophe paired iron with molded glass lenses, and then applied silver leaf. I love the fact that his works straddle the industrial world and the refined world so effortlessly." *Cristina Grajales, Cristina Grajales Inc., New York City*



Lush Life "There's a rise in the demand for work from the late 70s and early 80s, such as the wonderful fairy tale-like designs of Elisabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti. The surreal originality of work like these bronze leaf-shaped sconces was a departure from the steely minimalism of the period. The vast majority of their pieces were custom-made, so they are quite rare." *Craig Van Den Brulle, Craig Van Den Brulle Gallery, New York City*

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New Brazilians "Two names to watch out for are Roberto Hirth and Fernando Mendes—a design duo who have a woodworking studio in Rio de Janeiro. Last year, they won the design award from the Museu da Casa Brasileira, probably the most important design prize in Brazil. Mendes worked with the master designer Sergio Rodrigues for seven years. Hirth's family owned Laubisch-Hirth, once one of the top furniture-making companies in Brazil. Joaquim Tenreiro worked there. Mendes and Hirth's furniture is of phenomenal quality—so meticulously crafted that they refuse to make joints with nails or screws." *Carlos Junqueira, Espasso, New York City*





Rare steel, glass & bronze writing table, by Leleu, France, circa 1959



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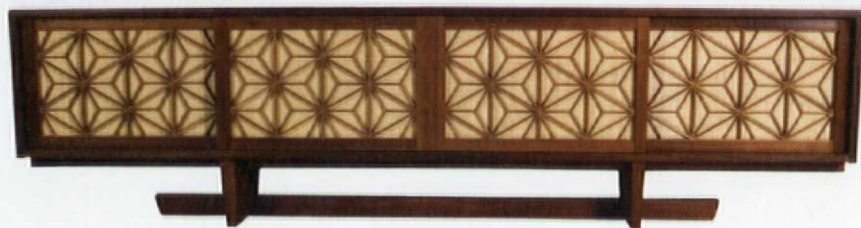
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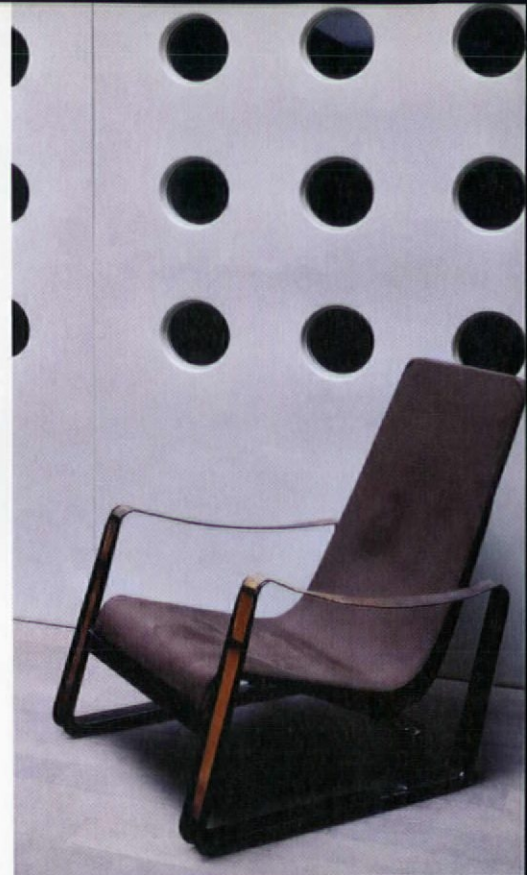
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New Sensations



Blue Chips "From what I'm seeing, people are not buying new artists and designers. I'm not saying the newer people won't have a successful future, but my 'old' collectors are looking for opportunities for A-list pieces by established designers, like Jean Prouvé, George Nakashima, and Jean Royère. They'd rather spend \$500,000 on someone they know than \$30,000 on someone they don't. Also, objects that people really use—sofas, coffee tables, dining tables—are selling more than novelty items and sculpture. In tough times, there's something secure about sitting around a big dining table at home. People really want to enjoy what they buy. It's practical if nothing else." *Alberto Aquilino, DeLorenzo 1950, New York City*



Art in Engineering "Jean Prouvé never fails to please. In fact, the greater historical perspective we get on his work, the more we realize just how important his oeuvre is. Prouvé—who was trained as a metalsmith and engineer—drew from the most cutting-edge technologies of his day to create designs that demonstrated true material efficiency, particularly through his innovative method for folding sheet metal. We are currently showcasing a 1969 "Cité" armchair and an aluminum cabinet made in the 50s at the Prouvé atelier. You cannot go wrong with Prouvé—he is a staple of twentieth century furniture and architecture." *Philippe Jousse, Jousse Entreprise, Paris*

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Wild About Harry "My focus for the last few years has been on the sculptural work of Harry Bertoia. Every Bertoia piece is unique. He made no editions. His designs are very organic, elemental, uncomplicated. His audience includes babies and the elderly. I've always bought things whose intrinsic value I could appreciate. I don't understand a Jeff Koons sculpture that goes for ten million bucks, or the Damien Hirsts of the world. But I do understand Bertoia." *James Elkind, Lost City Arts, New York City*



CRAIG VAN DEN BRULLE





Fresh Attitudes "I'm working with two emerging designers, Paul Loebach and Christopher Specce. [A Specce chair is shown at left.] Both are just starting to get established in the industry. They have a fresh perspective, especially in a world with lots of repetition and derivative design. And they are committed to making designs from sustainable material, or from materials that can easily be recycled. I'm glad to see the green movement become more inherent in the business and the manufacturing, as opposed to being just a label!" *Jamie Gray, Matter, New York City*

Tech and Technique "We only do a little contemporary design. I'm interested in Philip Michael Wolfson. He worked with Zaha Hadid, and then set up his own studio in 1991. Wolfson makes fantastically interesting furniture, especially the pieces in the 'Line Series,' which are amazing forms in bent aluminum and carbon fiber. He's definitely someone to watch. On the other side, there is a lot of interest in the turn-of-the-century marquetry work of Carlo Bugatti. [Shown below.] His pieces can be very ornate, but the quality of the inlays and the workmanship is incredible—even now his designs will fetch top dollar." *Nicholas Kilner, Sebastian + Barquet, New York City and London*

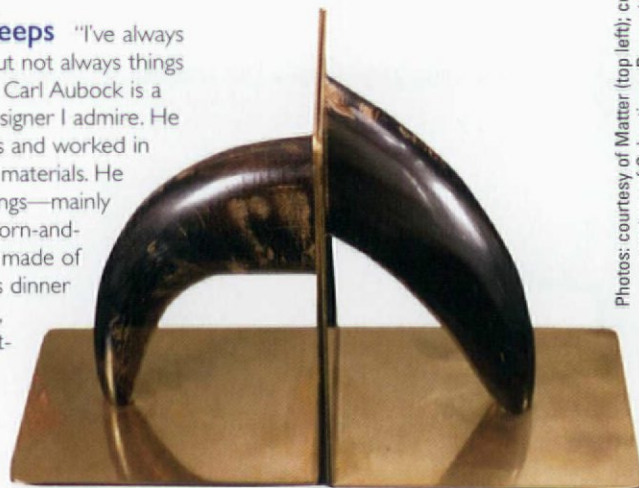
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Collecting for Keeps "I've always collected in earnest, but not always things that are very valuable. Carl Aubock is a good example of a designer I admire. He studied at the Bauhaus and worked in old-fashioned, organic materials. He didn't do many big things—mainly housewares, such as horn-and-brass bookends, flasks made of leather and glass, brass dinner bells, modern flatware, cane trays, antler coasters. Aubock's objects are very usable, and they say a lot about Austrian culture. In Aubock's day, you bought things that would patinate well and that you could pass on, which is an interesting idea these days when so much of the American way is to throw things out." *Michael Maharam, collector, New York City*



Vitreous Verve "Max Ingrand was one of the twentieth century's great masters working with glass, and our gallery will present a special show of his work this autumn. He was not a glassmaker, but he loved the material and tried to use it everywhere. He put it on walls, on doors, on furniture. He used glass in dynamic, surprising ways: for example, he would take a mirror and surround it with hand-hammered chunks of broken crystal. His lighting pieces are spectacular, and the Italian lighting firm Fontana Arte made him its artistic director in 1954. I think our show will really open a lot of eyes." *Jacques Lacoste, Galerie Jacques Lacoste, Paris*



New Sensations



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Women from Ipanema "I've been collecting designs by Claudia Moreira Salles, Lina Bo Bardi, and Etel Carmona—all of them female Brazilian architects who worked in the '50s. [A Bardi chair is shown below.] Worldwide, there weren't many women working in the field at that time; far fewer than today, at least. But the Brazilian design community seems to have fostered more prominent females than Italy or America did at the time. The work of these women has a certain style: strong but sensuous." *Ilene Kurtz-Kretzschmar, art advisor, curator, and publisher, Los Angeles*



Nameless Quality "We are committed to finding new artists and new collecting paths, and that search is all about quality and great craftsmanship. This chair, dated 1950, is made of cherry wood and mohair. There is no designer attribution. If you look at the structure of the piece, you'll see it is inspired by the best Italian design traditions, but the way the arms are joined to the feet is something you might find in a Scandinavian design. We are looking for pieces that tell a story. This chair represents a beautiful synthesis of different design traditions. The fact that it's anonymous doesn't affect the final value." *Antonio Ametrano, Hedge Gallery, San Francisco*



Artifacts of India "In 1950, Le Corbusier took over the design and construction of a new city in India: Chandigarh, a capital for the newly formed state of Haryana. There he and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret did some of their most amazing work, setting raw concrete buildings amid a lush landscape of gardens and forests. In our gallery, we have two of the streetlights that Corbusier designed for the city. They are wave-shaped concrete forms standing a bit over three-feet in height. He reasoned that if their purpose was to illuminate the footpath, there was no reason to make them as tall as a typical streetlight. I think they are beautiful." *Patrick Seguin, Galerie Patrick Seguin, Paris*

BY DAMARIS COLHOUN

—with additional reporting by Tamara Spitzer-Hobeika

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Symbolic, Cerebral, and Spiritual

The art and design of Pierre Székely embody a singular mix of the erudite and the ethereal

People go to Donna Karan's Urban Zen store in downtown Manhattan for many reasons. Most, of course, are there to shop the fashion designer's selection of elegant-but-earthly women's wear inspired by traditional garb from Asia, India, and Africa. Some come for the exotic jewelry and fragrances, or for the art photography, books, and educational DVDs on offer. Still others go in the spirit of giving, knowing that sales from the store—and its two sister shops—support Karan's Urban Zen Foundation (the core mission of the non-profit, established in 2006, is to foster the integration of ancient Eastern healing treatments and physical therapies with modern medical practices). But all visitors are no doubt mesmerized, if only for a few moments, by a singular example of art and design on display in the store: an eight-foot tall by ten-foot long room divider comprising 174 biomorphic forms made of sandblasted wood, each different in shape. "It has a soul behind it. It has creativity behind it. It has artistry behind it," Karan says. "It is spiritual and cultural—all qualities embodied by Urban Zen."

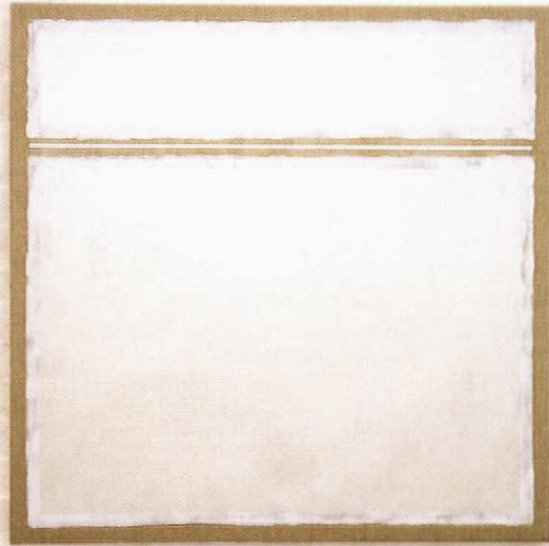
The room divider was created in 1962 by a French artist, Pierre Székely (1923-2001), whose functional pieces are familiar in this country only to the most dedicated design aficionados. Though first and foremost a sculptor, Székely made a number of specially-commissioned forays into design, working in materials ranging from ceramics to wood and metal. The room divider, for example, was made for the suburban Paris home of a friend, architect Henri Colboc. Székely would surely be pleased that the piece can now be enjoyed by anyone. "He had a deeply humanist spirit, and was philosophically opposed to art being kept in private, enclosed spaces," says April Magen who, with her husband, Hugues, runs New York's Magen H Gallery. "Székely always sought to have his sculpture placed where the public could see it. He believed art should be a vital part of everyone's life."

Below: The 1962 room divider by Székely is comprised of 174 different forms made of sandblasted wood and is hinged at three points.



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Designer Spotlight

Székely ably achieved his goal to be inclusive. By one count, 110 of his sculptures—many of them monumental in scale, made from stone or reinforced concrete—stand in public sites on three continents. Székely was as much a semiotician as a sculptor: he strove to create a vocabulary of forms that, like Egyptian hieroglyphics or modern international road signs, could be intuitively understood by a viewer. “There was a sort of archaeology in his creations,” April Magen says. “He was pure, almost to the point of being primordial.”

Székely also participated in several architectural projects on which he could bring his progressive political philosophies to bear. On the Brittany shore, for example, he helped design a sort of vacation commune of whitewashed concrete buildings—constructed between 1967 and 1969—where arc-roofed bungalows surround structures, in shapes suggested by shells, waves, and fruit, for communal dining, entertainment, and recreation (the compound resembles a set from *Star Wars*).

Székely did have a sense of humor and fun. In Évry, a “model town” project, built in the ‘60s, just south of Paris, the artist erected a nearly sixty-foot-tall concrete sculpture, triangular in profile and relatively blade-thin in width. The sculpture, completed in 1975, was covered in small outcroppings, chutes, balconies, and steep inclines dotted with handholds. Székely devised it as a place for rock-climbing enthusiasts to hone their skills.

For collectors of the applied arts, the most fertile ground for Székely pieces is the nine-year period—from 1946 to 1957—when he, his wife, Véra, and the painter André Borderie shared an atelier outside Paris, producing ceramics. The trio worked on projects alone and

together. Their shared hope was to create artful design that, rather than looking back at the war years with horror and repulsion, would look forward with optimism towards the new way of life they were sure would emerge from the conflict.

Véra and Pierre made pieces such as metal-framed tables with ceramic tops decorated with simple, colorful abstract forms, and pottery pieces that clearly show the marks of the makers’ hands. One ceramic vessel made in collaboration with Borderie in the mid-’50s (it is on offer from the Magens, who plan to present a Székely show late this autumn) has a bulbous base from which four smokestack-like pipes emerge. You have to picture sprays of flowers emerging from each tube to see how the design would be fully realized—though such a vision also prompts recollections of Vietnam War protestors placing flowers in the rifle barrels of National Guardsmen. Székely would likely have welcomed any interpretation: what mattered to him was that his work made you think.



Above: Székely and his wife, Véra, collaborated on this ceramic top table, made circa 1948 to 1953 and signed “PV Székely”

Modern
40



Left: Two views of a sculptural blue ceramic vase—more than two-feet tall and just as wide—made jointly by André Borderie and Székely circa 1948 to 1953 and signed by both artists.

CONVERSO

RICHARD MEIER
DINING SET
Knoll International
USA, 1982
lacquered wood





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A visit with Silas Seandel: artisan, sculptor, furniture-maker, and master of metal

These days—when design is taught via computer programs, and art students seem as calculating as finance majors—hands-on, largely self-taught studio artist-craftsmen are a vanishing breed. Silas Seandel, born in Brooklyn in 1937, has been keeping the fires of the tradition alive since the early '60s. In recent seasons, his singular pieces have won him a wide following among collectors.

Seandel's metal-based tables—his preferred form for what he calls “sculptural furniture”—generally fetch between \$5,000 and \$7,000 from design dealers. “Clients come in and say, ‘That table is fantastic—who did it?’” says Kurt Ducovna, co-owner of Galere, a West Palm Beach design dealership. “I think Seandel is still an under-known talent. His work falls between art and furniture. He is daring, and there is a kind of sensuousness in his use of metal.” MODERN spoke with Seandel, still hard at work on sculpture and furniture commissions, in his workspace and showroom in Manhattan's Chelsea district.



Left: Seandel's “Terra” table has a formstone top incised with channels filled with bronze. **Below:** The “Jools” cocktail table has a glass top inset into a solid cast-metal base—bronze in this example, though it can be made of copper, steel, or almost any metal.

It must be nice, being in the center of the New York art world. Yes, but it's a coincidence. This is my fifth studio in New York—and my last. I've been here since 1978. Back then these places were all auto-body shops and warehouses.

You earned an economics degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Kind of an odd choice for someone with an artistic bent. I didn't know I had an artistic bent. After I left the service, I had no idea what to do. A family friend suggested that a business major was a safe path. I did the homework and got good grades. But I didn't learn anything.

So how did you discover your path?

Well, I was always a tinkerer. I liked to work with my hands, and took clay-modeling classes in college. I was intrigued by Calder. I made little mobiles and models—

but it was just a hobby. One week in 1963, I went to Cape Cod. I had a couple of hours to kill in Provincetown, waiting for a friend to meet me, so I went to [the Walter P. Chrysler] museum, where they had a show about sculptures of the '50s. I saw metal sculptures by John Chamberlain, Jason Seley, and Richard Stankiewicz, and thought, “Wow! That's what I want to do!”

What was it about metal that inspired you? It goes back to Calder—that perfect joinery of parts. Metal is wonderful: it's strong, durable, impervious, but at the same time it can be flexible and formable. I loved to see molten metal flow.

Left: A brass variant on Seandel's welded sheet metal “Convolutioned Tree Truck” table.



Photos: courtesy of Silas Seandel Studio; courtesy of Galere, West Palm Beach (bottom)



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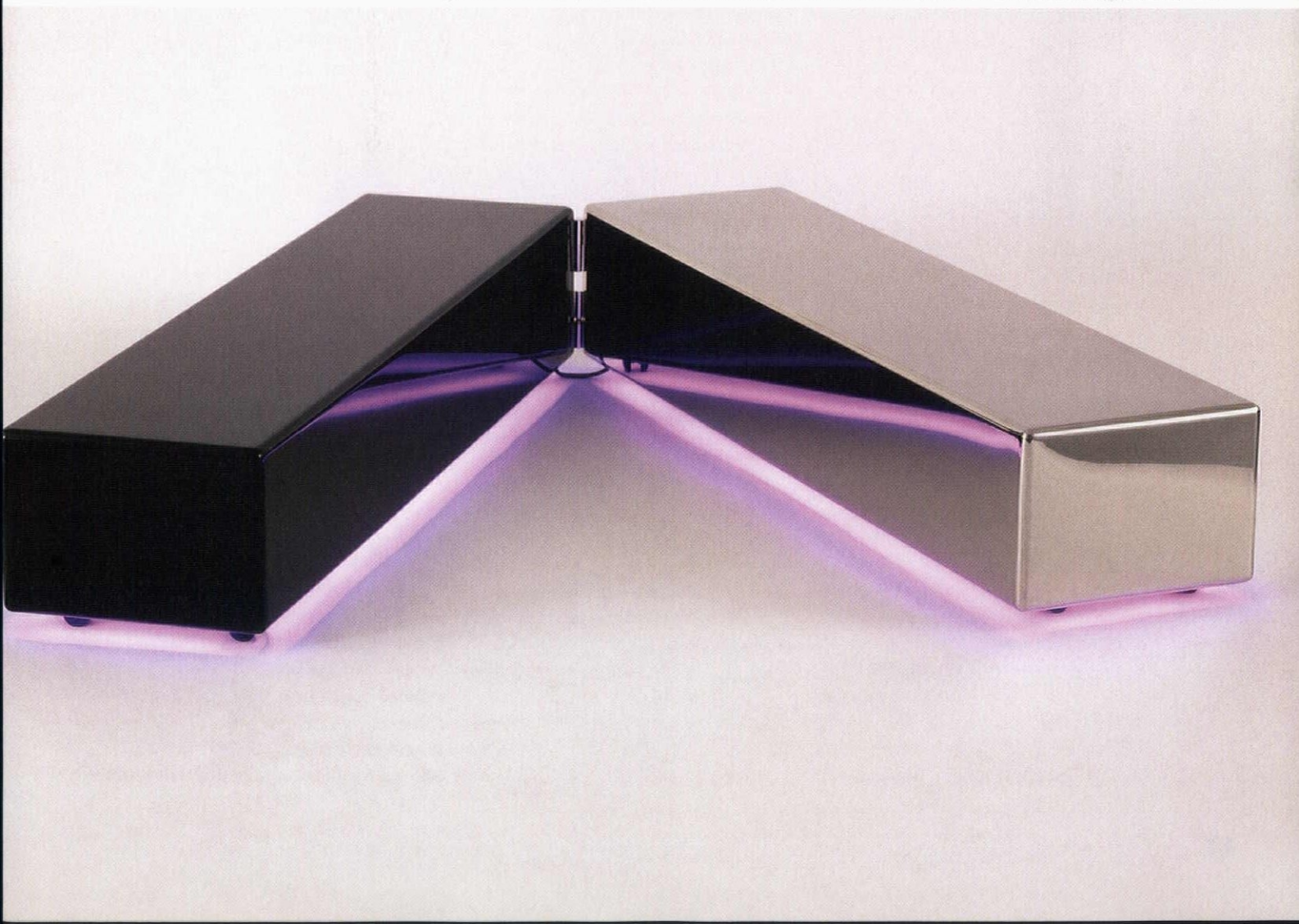
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Johanna Grawunder, "Splits", 2007, black/ stainless steel, LEDs, 200 x 40 x 50 cm, edition 6 + 2 A.P., Auction Design, November 2009



Right: The two-foot tall "Volcano" and "Twigs" (far right) end tables executed in cast bronze. **Below, left:** Seandel often alters his designs—a "Volcano" form reworked as coffee table is shown—to accommodate new aesthetic ideas, or new uses. **Below, right:** The bronze planes that form the base of the "Primitive 2" dining table have a softer look because of the application of a polychrome patina.



Modern
46

And then? I went back to New York, bought a book on welding, and set up a studio in the kitchen of my walk-up apartment in the Village. I started experimenting and learning technique using tin cans. It was illegal, of course. I had to smuggle in welding torches and fuel tanks. But I learned—mostly from the mistakes I made.

Were you showing your work to art galleries? Oh, no. I still had so much technique to learn. I was dirt poor. I bagged groceries in the neighborhood, and worked as a stockboy at [the now-defunct department store] B. Altman. But I spent every free minute working on metal.

What was your "big break"? There were two, really. One was almost an accident. Altman got the contract to renovate a country club in Westchester County, and the guy in charge of the project knew I was an aspiring sculptor. He asked me to make a wall sculpture for the dining room—it showed golfers in different phases of a swing. A lot of decorators saw it, and started to call me with commissions. Also, about that time they were opening the D&D Building [the Decoration & Design Building in midtown

Manhattan, which houses dozens of showrooms]. Friends said I should put my work on display in one place, so I borrowed \$30,000, rented a space, and got so much exposure from decorators, and department stores like Neiman Marcus and Gump's, that I was able to pay back the loan in three months.

How did you come to take up furniture? Because of fakes. I learned that people were making copies of the pieces in my catalogue, and doing a sloppy job of it. So I decided to make furniture. You can't fake furniture—the craftsmanship is much more demanding. You have to get the balance and proportions just right.

What techniques do you use? Two, mainly. Some pieces are made of rolled sheet metal that is cut into forms that are welded together, then ground and polished. The other method is metal-casting, usually using bronze or copper.

Most of your pieces have a similar format: a glass top with ... That's so you can see the sculptural metal base, which I think is the most important part, naturally.

Of course. So your pieces with stone-and-metal tops are a departure. The idea is actually old. But it took a long time to realize, because I had to do a

lot of experimenting to create a form-stone in which I could create fissures to fill with veins of metal. It's called the "Terra" table. It's meant to resemble a vertical slice of rock, with creases of ore running through it.

Looking around at all these examples of your work, it's easy to tell that they were all made by the same hand. Yet you don't have a signature style, really. Part of that is the beauty of metal—you can do anything with it. Mostly, I follow my instincts. That has always stood me in good stead. I get an image in my head, and I just go with it. I don't dwell on a particular form. Because of that, I have a fairly large body of work in which each piece is distinctive. Some works are similar, but no two are identical.

What's going on for you now? Well, I recently finished a pretty large public sculpture commission—a fifteen-foot-tall stainless-steel-and-bronze 9/11 memorial for the grounds of Greenwich Hospital in Connecticut.

Other than that, I have a good roster of clients, so it's just the usual: day-to-day hard work. I have two assistants who have each been with me for more than thirty years. But working with this stuff, especially at my age, is tough.

Ever thought about taking up a new, perhaps lighter, material? Nah. I'm too in love with my welding torch.



Photos: courtesy of Silas Seandel Studio; courtesy of Galere, West Palm Beach (center)

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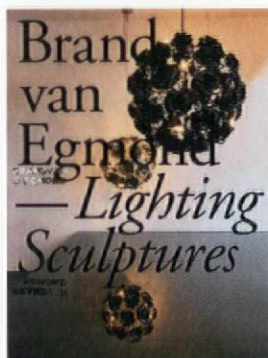
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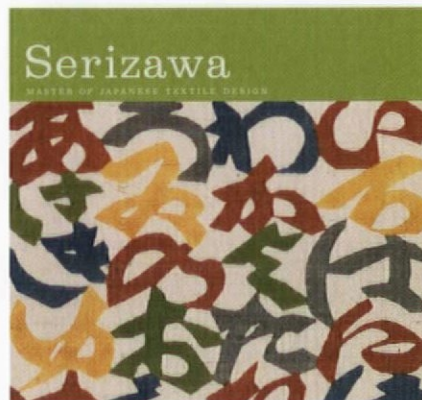
Auction Galleries

New books on weavers from the Bauhaus and Japan; artful lighting; and Henry Ford's folly

The fact that William Brand and Annet van Egmond are darlings of the high-fashion set—Karl Lagerfeld has featured their chandeliers in photo shoots—gives us pause. Still, the Dutch design duo's beautifully illustrated new book, **Lighting Sculptures**, offers persuasive evidence that their neo-rococo lighting pieces—most made of iron and crystal—have less to do with aesthetic fads than with a desire to contribute to the continuum of design history. (*Terra Publishers, 176 pages, \$80*)



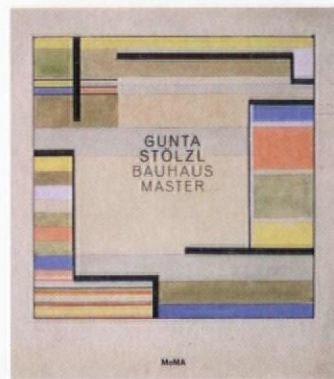
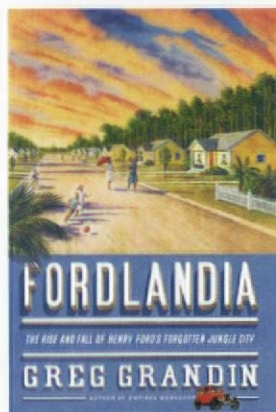
Serizawa Keisuke (1895-1984) was named a "Living National Treasure" by Japan in 1956, an honor that reflected not only his artistry in textiles but also his role in advancing the mingei—Japanese folk art—movement. His seminal achievement was to foster a traditional stencil-dyeing technique he had learned in Okinawa. More than his technical expertise, **Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design**—edited by Joe Earle and the catalogue to an exhibition that opens at New York's Japan Society in October—demonstrates the designer's questing eye. While Serizawa was drawn to motifs based on sources as varied as Aesop's fables and an image of Christ (even though he was not a Christian), it is his abstract patterns that emphasize one aspect of the debt that



Western modernism owes to the decorative arts of Japan. (*Yale University Press, 144 pages, \$35*)

Modern
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In 1929, hoping to thwart the Anglo-Dutch rubber cartel in Southeast Asia, Henry Ford began construction of an agro-industrial rubber plantation on a land concession roughly the size of Connecticut in the Amazon basin. As Greg Grandin explains in **Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City**, a rich, engaging history of the automaker's fiefdom, the project was as much about social engineering via urban planning as it was about commodity production. Ford built tidy "American-style" neighborhoods with trim cottages for his workers, but he also forbade them to smoke or drink. The enterprise was a total disaster, mismanaged from the start. In the virgin jungle, rubber trees grow far apart; when cultivated en masse, the plants are decimated by insects. For their part, the workers merely took their "vices" to a town upstream, and rioted in 1930 over Ford's strictures. Ironically, synthetic rubber became industrially available in the mid-1930s. Call *Fordlandia* a case of unplanned obsolescence. (*Metropolitan Books, 432 pages, \$27.50*)



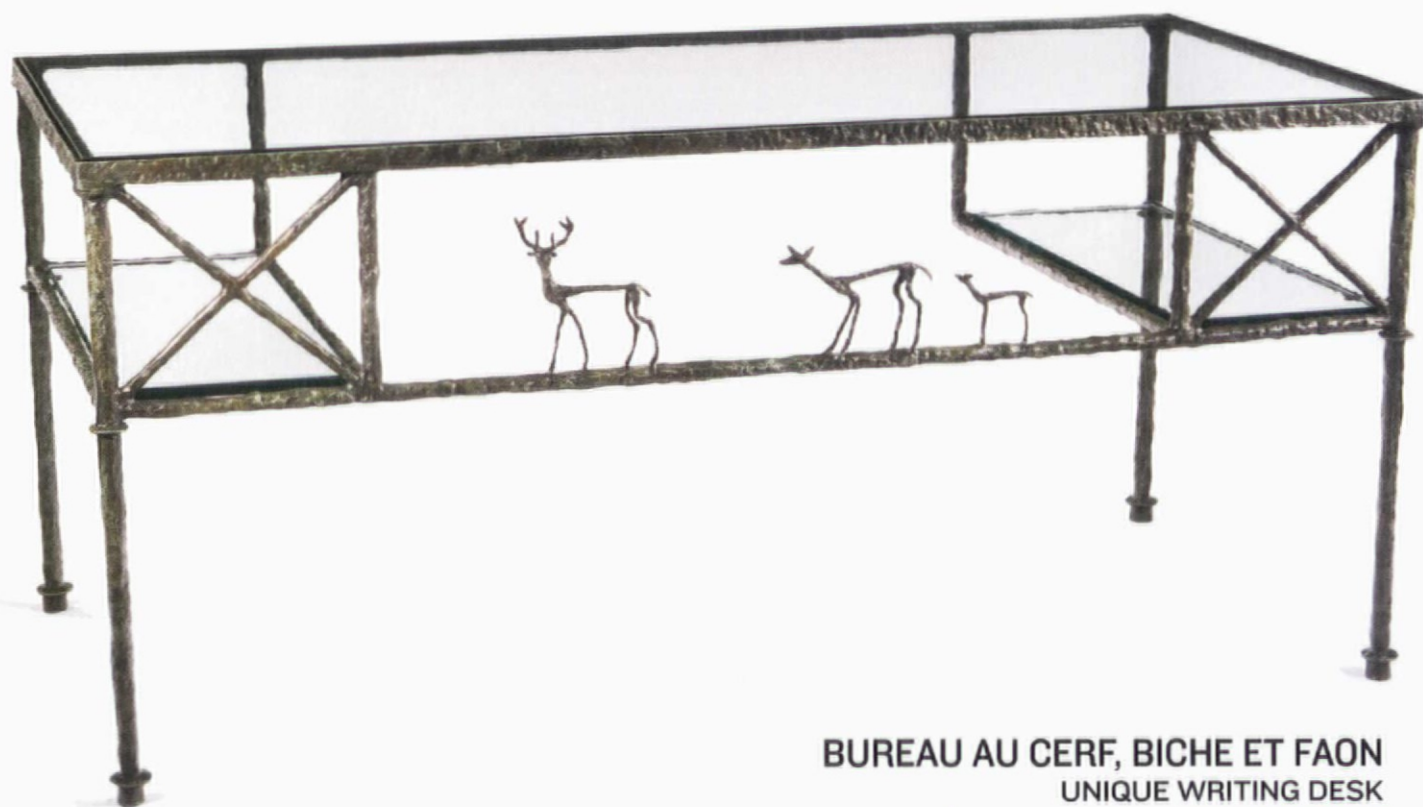
The only female master-teacher at the Bauhaus, head of the department of weaving, Gunta Stölzl (1897-1983) has been the subject of previous biographies. The new book **Gunta Stölzl: Bauhaus**

Master—chock-full with images of Stölzl's drawings, watercolors, and pieces ranging from blankets and rugs to wall hangings—offers a view of her hungry eye for imagery, as well as an intimate perspective on her life and work. The text, selected by her daughter Monika Stadler, consists of excerpts from Stölzl's diaries and letters, as well as a few published articles. Along with her pained revelations of her struggle to gain respect in a male-dominated institution, Stölzl explains how a cohort of jealous creative spirits realized, as she wrote in her diary, that design "is not [about] the thing itself, but how it forms a whole with the surrounding space." (*Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 132 pages, \$39.95*)

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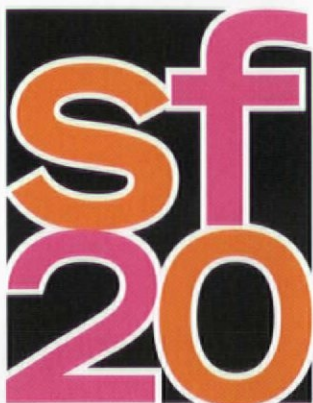
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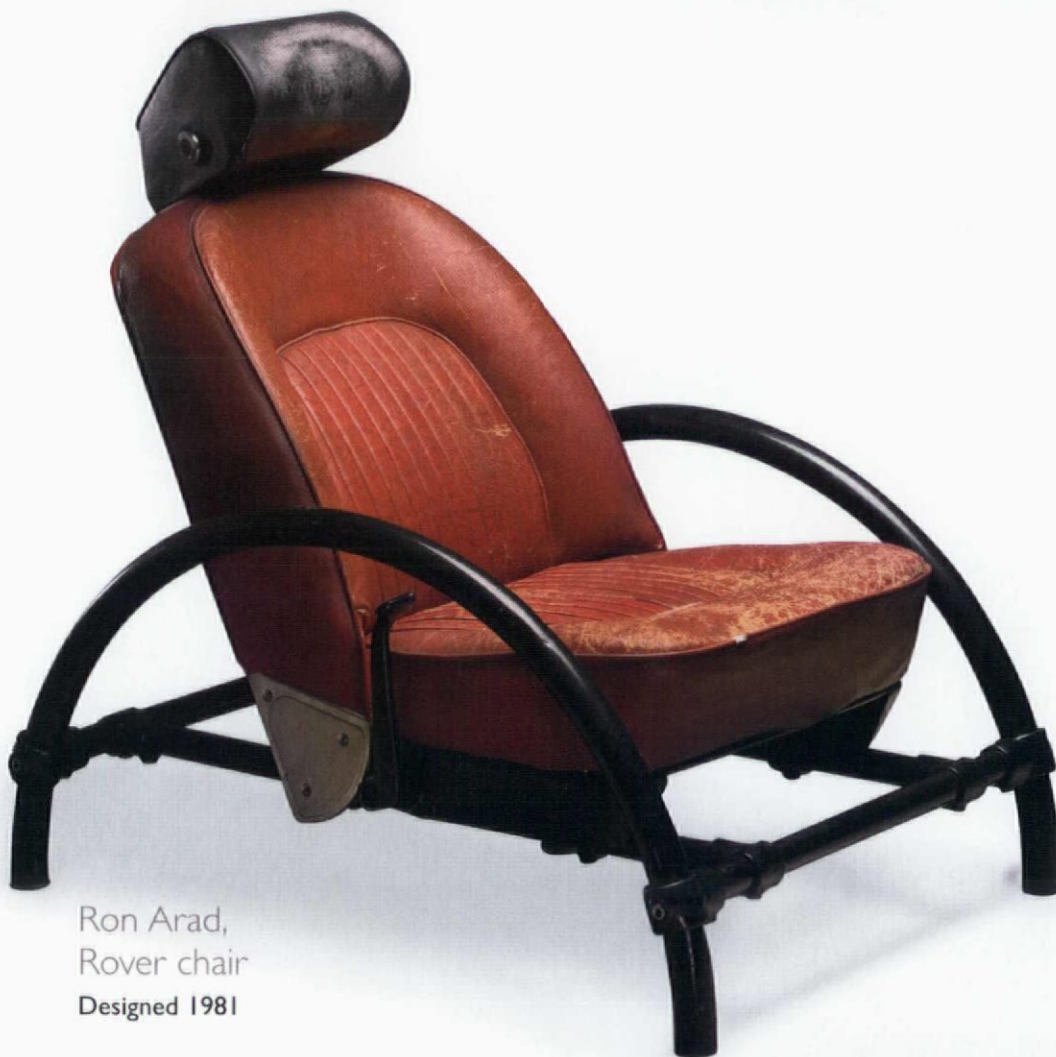
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Left: Roman Cieslewicz. *Ksiądz Marek (Frjar Marek)* (detail), 1963. Poster for production of the 1843 drama by Juliusz Słowacki. Offset lithograph. The Museum of Modern Art. Gift of the artist

Right: Visitors at the exhibition *Useful Objects of American Design under \$10*, The Museum of Modern Art, November 26–December 24, 1940 (detail). Gelatin-silver print. Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives

We asked custodians of leading twentieth-century decorative arts collections to discuss one object they feel is particularly noteworthy. Here is a gallery of their choices.



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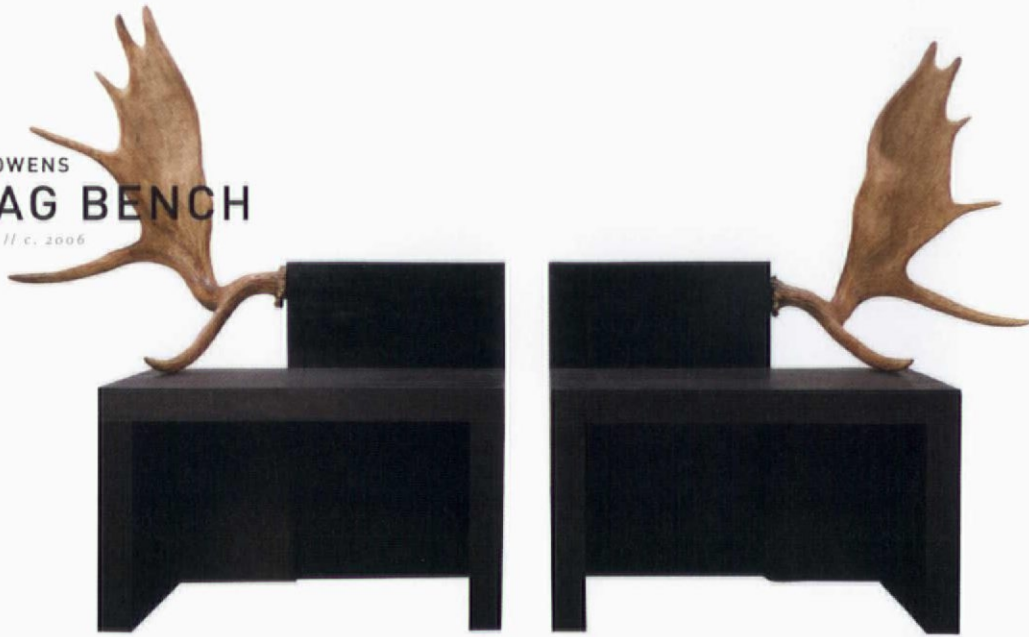
Ron Arad,
Rover chair
Designed 1981

"The Rover represents so much about both Ron Arad and the spirit of design in the early '80s. It is a key piece in MoMA's current exhibition about his work—the first museum retrospective on Ron's career. We titled the show "No Discipline" in reference to a remark he once made about his creations: "It's not design, it's not art. I'm just doing what comes to me." The legend is that Arad found some seats from a Rover 200 car in a scrapyard, picked them up, and attached tubular steel legs. They are a beautiful example of a kind of individualistic, post-punk view on design. Designers like Tom Dixon—making striking objects from junk—are part of the same gestalt. The Rover chairs are a perfect emblem of the renegade spirit of the '80s—when objects were produced from outside the mainstream of art and design."

*Paola Antonelli, Senior curator, Department of Architecture and Design,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York City.*

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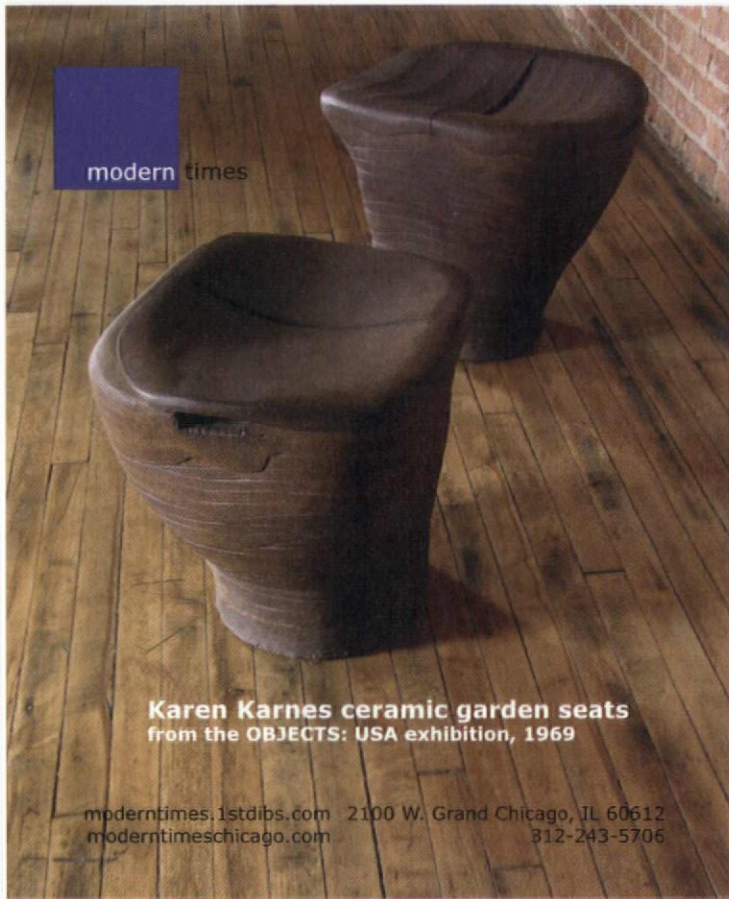
Modern
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Donald Deskey,
Table lamp
Designed circa 1927
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,
The John Axelrod Collection

"Strikingly modern in its zigzag design and use of aluminum, this outstanding table lamp designed by Donald Deskey is a recent gift to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from the noted collector John P. Axelrod, whose generosity has transformed the MFA's ability to display and interpret this 'machine age' era in American art and design. The lamp, along with a rare related ashtray also given by John, was featured in Deskey's 'Man's Smoking Room' installed at the American Designers' Gallery in New York in October 1928. That smoking room will be evoked in a gallery setting in the museum's new American Wing, scheduled to open in late 2010."

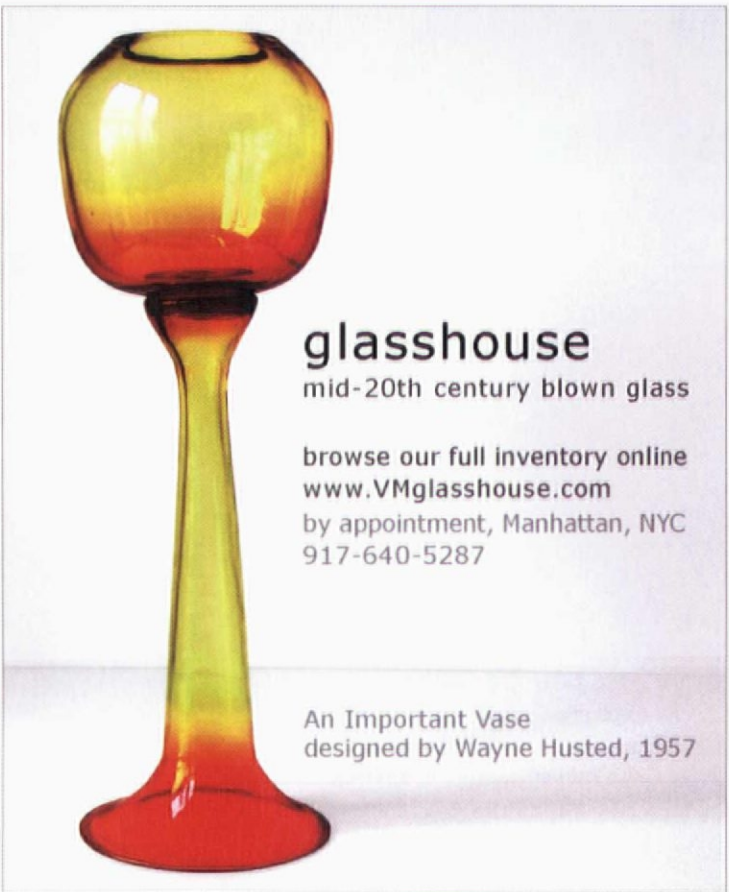
Gerald Ward, Katharine Lane Weems Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Art of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



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Karen Karnes ceramic garden seats
from the OBJECTS: USA exhibition, 1969

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An Important Vase
designed by Wayne Husted, 1957



PHOTO: Nathaniel Havholm

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Modern
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Joe Colombo,
Tube chair
Designed 1969

Photo: courtesy of Wright

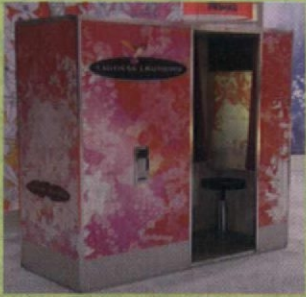
“Colombo’s Tube chair is a revolutionary piece of furniture. It is made of four PVC cylinders of varying sizes—which were surrounded in polyurethane foam that was covered in either fabric or a plastic coating in bold colors, such as red or yellow. The tubes fit into one another, like Russian nesting dolls, and the lightweight chair came packaged in a drawstring burlap bag. It makes things so easy: You went to the store, picked up the bag, and assembled the chair yourself at home using padded clips that came with the tubes. There are many combinations possible when putting the cylinders together. What is truly remarkable about this design is that it embodies an ideal of mobile furniture, which corresponds to the relaxed lifestyle of the late 1960s. You could set up the Tube chair to watch television, or take it out into the backyard.”

*Dominique Forest, Curator, Department of Modern/Contemporary Art,
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris*

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Greg Lynn,
Sterling silver flatware
Designed 2007



Modern
62

"Through digital literacy and enhanced fabrication techniques, contemporary architects and designers have recently returned to the use of figurative characteristics in the design arts. Flatware has traditionally been a design object that employs floral motifs. Greg Lynn's prototype flatware is a brilliant example of this reinterpretation of this tradition. Produced with a three-dimensional digital printing method that employed liquid metal, each piece was created by layering liquid forms atop one another. This flatware is also the first example of liquid metal to be used in rapid prototyping. The cutlery was conceived as a system of stem, leaf, and flowers that forms a single setting. Formally, the flatware reflects Lynn's ongoing interest in Art Nouveau and the craft-laden designs of Victor Horta. Each piece is figuratively articulated and differentiated from the others to reflect its function. Collectively, the flatware presents itself as a bouquet of flowers."

*Joseph Rosa, John H. Bryan Curatorial Chair of Architecture and Design,
the Art Institute of Chicago*



Glazed ceramic pot by American studio potters Edwin and Mary Scheier, signed and dated 1988.

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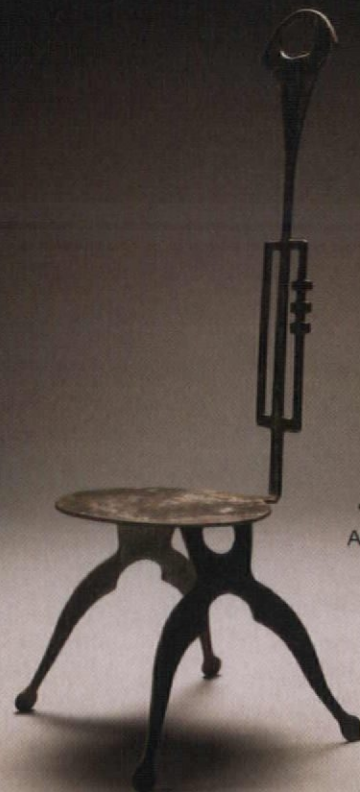
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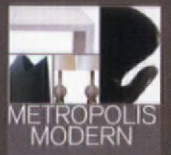
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American bar/cabinet in ebonized and natural walnut with pyramidal panel doors, c. 1950's.



Gio Ponti "Diamond" four piece sterling silver tea set by Reed & Barton, c. 1950.



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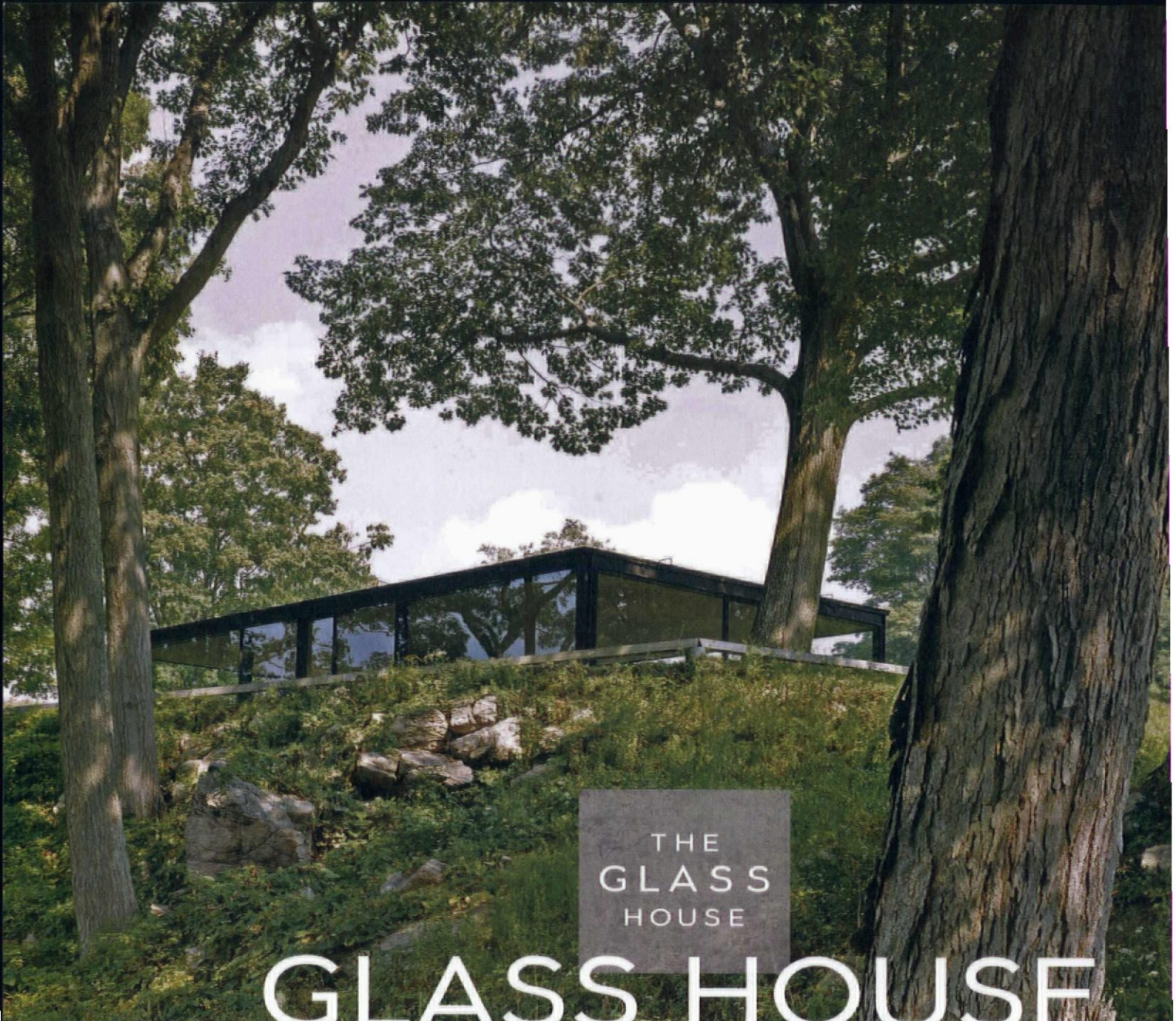
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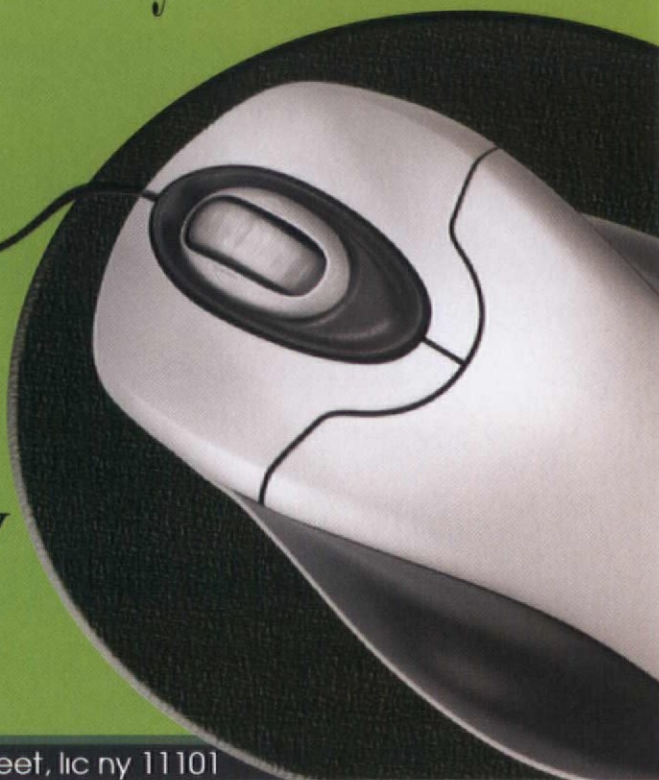
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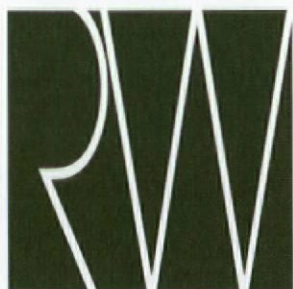


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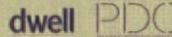
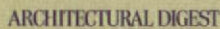
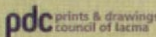
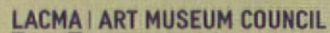
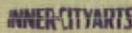
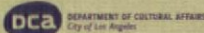
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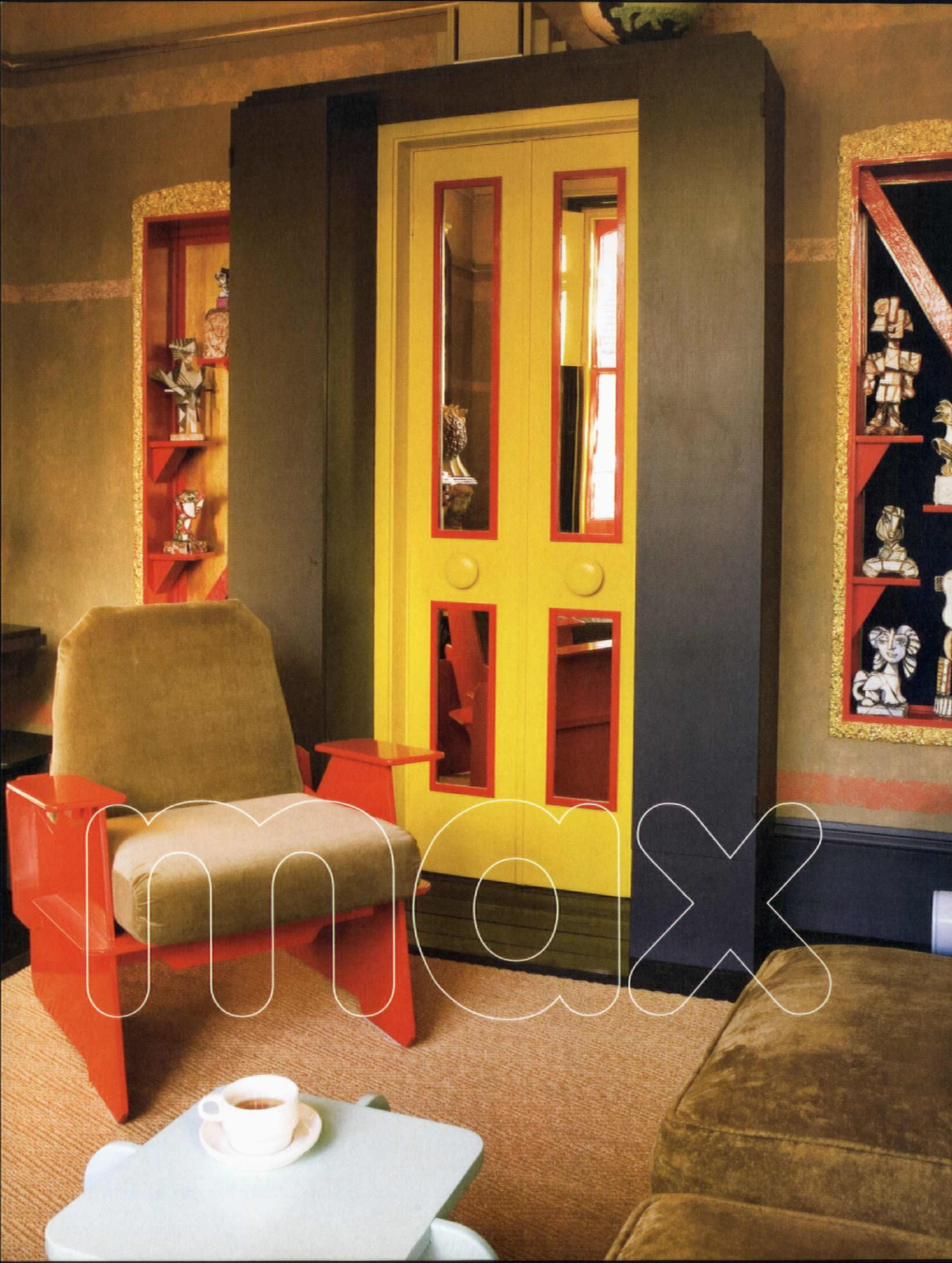
The lively interiors in the London row house of designer Max Clendinning hark back to the bouncy brio of the "British Invasion" years

BY GUY BLOCH-CHAMPFORT

Modern
74

mod

Photographs by Antoine Rozès





Preceding page: The vividly-colored living room in the home of Max Clendinning and Ralph Adron testifies to their energetic, fun-loving spirit. Along with artwork by both men, the room contains several furniture pieces designed by Clendinning, including an orange armchair, made in 2005, and a side table from the mid-'60s. **Left:** Adron built the secretary from fiberboard, and painted it with motifs inspired by a Jacobean drama. **Below, left:** An Adron sculpture helps delineate the dining room. Clendinning's "Maxima" chairs surround the table. **Right:** A collection of glassware by Ettore Sottsass.



Picture a typical Victorian house, on a quiet London street, near a park where kids are playing cricket. Imagine then how surprising it is to walk into the entrance hall and find not an "old England" ambience but a dazzling décor, with room after room adorned with surprising, edgy, and colorful furniture, and an array of free-spirited hand-made and -decorated objects. The rooms offer a textbook example of the way sleek-lined and functional modernist pieces can live in harmony with both traditional and quirkily artistic designs.

The charming gentleman who greets you is an architect and designer whose name, for many Britons, is synonymous with the bright, Carnaby Street vibe of the '60s and early '70s. He is Max Clendinning—in his heyday, along with David Hicks, a leading figure in British interior design. The Hicks look traveled well, so to speak. His décors were lush but tempered with formality—as seen in his famed geometrically patterned carpets and wallpapers—and he became a darling of style arbiters across the Atlantic.

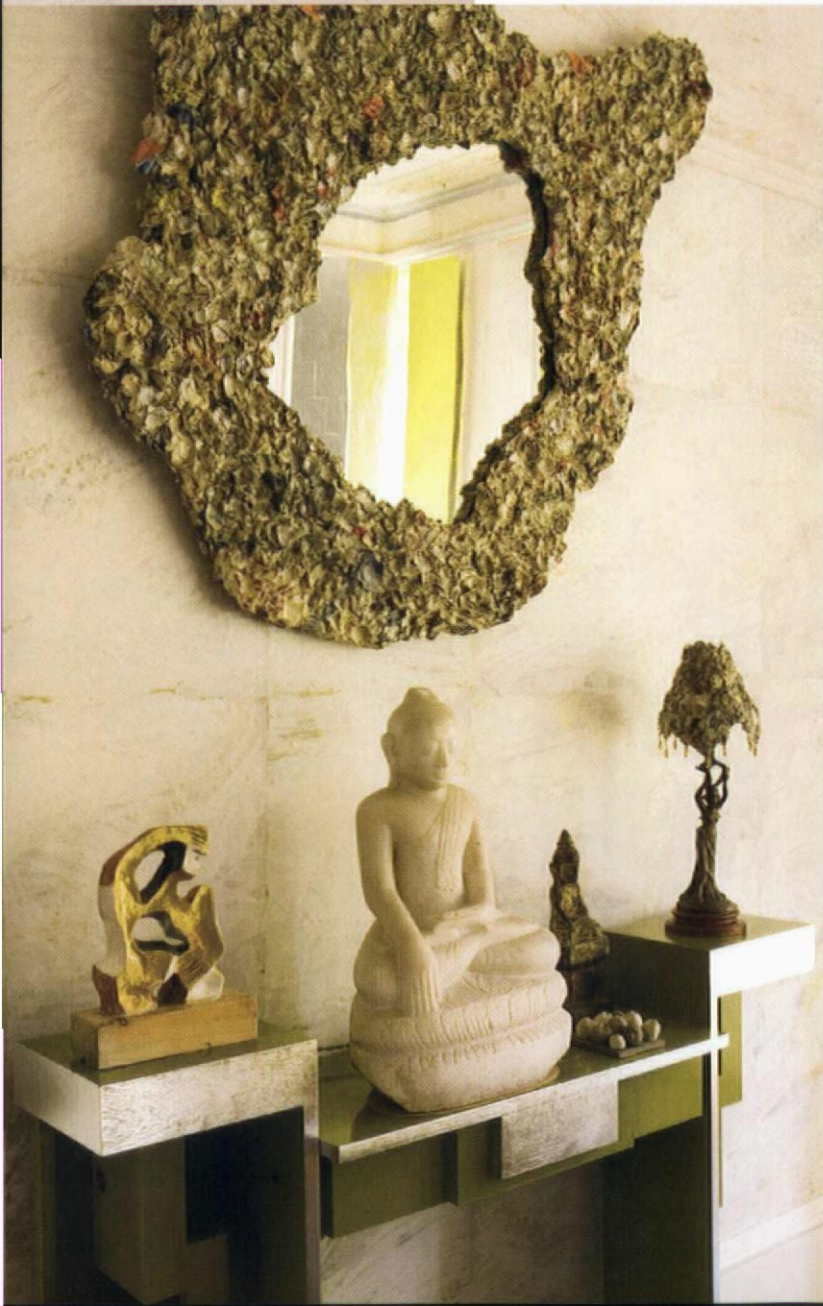
Clendinning, by contrast, was an iconoclast and never obtained such global renown. He filled spaces with curved lines and vibrant colors such as violet, red, and turquoise. Or he could do a complete about-face. In the mid-'60s, Clendinning painted his living room entirely in white and removed all the furnishings save for a long, snake-like beanbag cushion and a giant tulip-shaped papier-mâché lamp, made by his longtime companion, artist Ralph Adron.





Left: Sadly—perhaps incredibly—none of Clendinning’s designs are in production. He designed this chair with an elliptical back—made, like all his pieces, from lacquered plywood—a few years ago for use at his desk.

Below, left: Clendinning designed this console in 2006. He also designed the papier-mâché frame for the mirror. One of his abstract ceramic sculptures sits to the right of an eighteenth-century Buddha.



The scheme was shocking at the time, and would still be thought so today. But Clendinning likely wanted to cause a stir. As he says: “A home must be an experience; it should be like the stage set of a play.”

Born in Northern Ireland in 1924, the son of a furniture manufacturer, Clendinning studied architecture in Belfast before receiving a scholarship to the prestigious Architectural Association of London. He received his diploma in 1953, and worked for various firms before setting up his own

practice in 1955. Clendinning was a success. His 1960 Oxford Road rail station in Manchester—which features a spade-shaped, upwardly thrusting cantilevered roof—is today on Britain’s list of national landmarks.

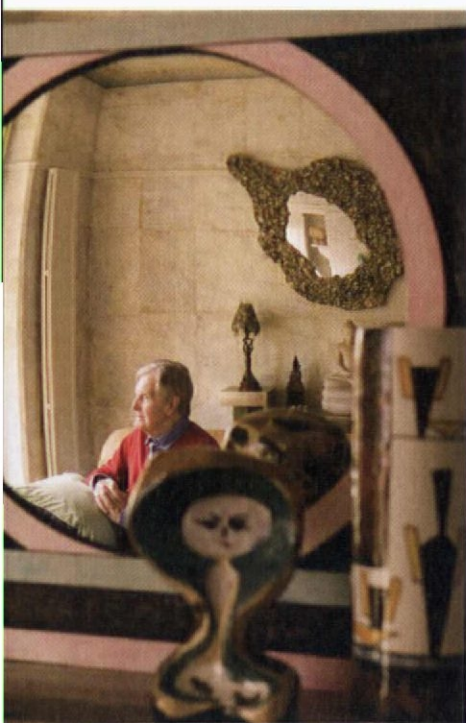
But architecture can be a restrictive business, with many roadblocks. The commission that first brought Clendinning’s talent for furniture and interiors to the public eye was his 1965 design for the tea room at the tony Regent Street department store Liberty. His varnished wood tables and chairs upholstered in Irish tweed earned raves in the press, and encouraged Clendinning to move ahead with furniture design. His earliest prototypes were made at the family factory in Ulster. He created chair frames and table supports from plywood heavily lacquered in white, and made the clever decision to make designs with component parts that could be shipped “flat-packed,” then easily assembled by a buyer, or for display in a showroom—just as Ikea does today. Clendinning’s first production line, the “Maxima” collection unveiled by Britain’s Race Furniture Ltd. in 1966, has a look that reflects a futuristic Pop Art sensibility more often seen in the work of French and Italian design of



Max Clendinning is an iconoclast.

He fills spaces with curved lines and vibrant colors such as pink, lipstick red, and turquoise. Or he can do a complete about-face, and create an all-white room.

Opposite page: This parlor is Adron's enclave. The murals represent the night sky seen through trees, with stars made from bits of gilt. He designed the chandelier with figures representing furniture, animals, and vegetation—the whole made from cardboard, papier-mâché, and scrap wood—as well as the mantel. The fireplace is surround with inset plaque is the work of Thomas Jeckyll, a Victorian architect and proponent of Japanese design; the clock is by the Aesthetic Movement designer Lewis Foreman Day. **Below:** Clendinning reflected in a convex mirror of his design. He made the figurative sculpture in 1951; the vase is a '50s Italian piece.



the day. Critics were nonplussed, yet receptive. As one wrote: "Race has always taken an experimental approach to furniture design, but this most recent line looked startlingly unusual—those wavy wooden shapes and fat Freudian cushions. First impressions mellow, however, and at a harder glance this furniture, designed by a young architect, Max Clendinning, revealed some serious design thinking." Lately, collectors have also done a reevaluation. While Clendinning pieces come to auction infrequently, in just the past several years the average sales price of a Maxima chair has doubled, to about \$3,000.

Outré as his inclinations often were, Clendinning could be sober and respectful when required. In 1973, for example, the fashion house Christian Dior asked him to modernize the ground-floor showroom of its London headquarters on Conduit Street. The problem was that Dior occupied a fine late-eighteenth century town house. To reconcile the aesthetic differences, Clendinning designed simple rectilinear sales and display islands, topped with chrome-edged vitrines, and placed semicircular display consoles (tiered like wedding cakes) against the walls. Most importantly, he used a mid-tone gray for every design element, down to the wall-to-wall Wilton carpeting. The effect was that the Georgian architecture was not upstaged, and Dior's couture pieces looked wonderful against the neutral background color.

There are numerous genuflections to the past in the house that Clendinning shares with Adron, whose aesthetic allegiance is to the nineteenth century. Following a Victorian fashion for scenically painted rooms, Adron adorned one parlor with murals meant to suggest the night sky viewed through tree branches. Wallpapers in patterns by William Morris, eminence of the English Arts & Crafts movement, adorn the ceilings and walls in other rooms. Artifacts such as aged statues of Buddha, as well as pieces of Aztec art, testify to the pair's interest in antiquity. But Clendinning and Adron also know the value of aesthetic tension. Adron's warm and imaginative artwork and Clendinning's free-spirited statues stand out in contrast to linear designs by Clendinning and pieces such as a 1932 molded plywood Paimio chair by Alvar Aalto and glassware by Bořek Šípek—a Czech architect and designer whose works often graft rococo forms onto a modernist core—and Ettore Sottsass. The presence of the latter's work is ironic, given that Clendinning's nose-thumbing aesthetic preceded the Sottsass-led Memphis design collective's irreverent work by nearly twenty years.

Even when it comes to the traditional furnishings in their house, Clendinning and Adron approach things in the spirit of playfulness and experimentation. Adron changed the character of a white-painted Louis



Above, left: The Victorian detail in the entry hall have been left intact, to enhance the effect of the modern designs within the house. The bust and plinth are by Clendinning. **Above, right:** In the living room, a powder-blue settee by Clendinning sits next to Adron's mid-'60s papier-mâché tulip lamp. The red chair at rear left is a prototype from a collection that Clendinning designed for the London department store Liberty in 1965. The large painting is a mid-'70s work by Natalie Gibson.

Examples of Ralph Adron's warm and fanciful artistic work stand out in contrast to linear designs by Clendinning—the two know the value of aesthetic tension.

XV-style fauteuil completely with the addition of abstract needlepoint upholstery. Likewise, Adron built a Palladian-esque secretary and painted it with scenes suggested by a Jacobean play. For his part, Clendinning obviously had fun using the traditional architecture as an envelope for his works, placing splashy-colored furniture of his design in some rooms and nodding to the all-white décor in another. Movable louvered screens can change the shape of rooms and the sight lines between spaces. One such piece, covered in gilt leaf, can be pulled in front of a window to create a unique light that is both brilliant and gauzily golden. Doors are painted in different, equally vivid, hues, giving the visitor a temporary hallucinatory experience. The textures of sleek, modern objects play off the crusty surfaces of ancient pieces, each enriching the other.

Through their endearing charm, boundless creativity, and a generosity of spirit that not only reconciles but also marries two seemingly opposing tastes, Clendinning and Adron have shaped a remarkable, unique living environment. Thoughtful devotees of modernism know that aesthetic uniformity is not the summit of design. In this light, Max Clendinning—who defines himself, inarguably, as an “architect artist”—should be reconsidered, and recognized as one of the most original designers of our time.

Guy Bloch-Champfart is the author of numerous articles and books on design and art. Translated from the French by Tamara Spitzer-Hobeika



Top: Clendinning's dynamic architectural design is complemented by several pieces of furniture he designed. From left: A cabinet designed for Liberty in 1965 (originally painted in a rich red); a planar armchair designed in 2005; and a recent table made from scrap wood found on the street. Atop that table, at left, is a maquette of his "Parma" chair—featuring an inverted teardrop-shaped cutout in the backrest—designed for a 2005 retrospective of his work at the Ulster Museum in Belfast. **Above, left:** The stairwell features a bust by Clendinning as well as a display case holding more glassware by Sottsass. **Above, right:** Needlepoint upholstery by Adron, with motifs he devises at his whim as he works along, transforms a period reproduction French chair.

BY CHLOE LIESKE

The Be-bop Jewelry of Art Smith



'SWONDERFUL, 'SMARVELOUS SMITH

Modern
82



Photos: courtesy of Mark McDonald (portrait); all others courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum, gift of Charles L. Russell



The lively, boisterous spirit of the post-war *vie bohème* of struggling artists, musicians, and writers is now only a distant memory in New York's Greenwich Village. Today the area's ambience is a strange mix of deluxe and dreck—a place where velvet-rope bistros and nightclubs sit around the corner from tacky souvenir and T-shirt shops. Famed artists' hangouts like the Cedar Tavern are long gone, and poor creative types can no longer afford to rent small apartments in the brick and brownstone town houses on the neighborhood's quiet side streets. But you can still listen to top-of-the-line jazz at venues such as the Village Vanguard and the Blue Note, and a jazz sensibility was key to the work of a designer who kept the essence of the old Village alive almost into the 1980's—the jewelry maker Art Smith (1917-1982).

Because it is essentially ornamental, jewelry is often overlooked in the study of modernism. But jewelry is a perfect platform for experimentation in form. Many of the American studio designer-artists making jewelry in the decades following World War II—Smith, Margaret de Patta, Ed Weiner, Frank Rebajes, and others—explored the same

ideas as their counterparts in furniture design and architecture, such as organic figuring, simplicity of line, and the use of new materials. But Art Smith designed with a special verve, a kind of musicality of spirit. Pieces like his swooping "Patina" necklace, or his dazzling starburst-shaped brooches, have that dual air of bravura and grace you hear in "Satin Doll" and other great jazz standards. "Smith had a uniquely expressive style," says Richard Wright, the owner of Wright auction house in Chicago. "His work has a more lyrical quality than that of some of his contemporaries."

You can judge for yourself at the Brooklyn Museum, which is hosting "From the Village to Vogue: The Modernist Jewelry of Art Smith," an installation that runs until March 2010. "I hoped that some day we'd have one piece by Smith," says Barry Harwood, the decorative arts curator who organized the show. Thanks to a gift from Charles Russell, Smith's longtime companion and one of his heirs, and to the help of Mark McDonald, a leading dealer in twentieth century design, the museum has twenty-one pieces. All are on view in a small yet striking installation, which details the designer-artist's life and work.



Opposite page, top: Art Smith in his Greenwich Village shop in an undated photo.

Below: Smith's "Cluster Knuckles" ring, designed circa 1968, incorporates jade, turquoise, zoisite, and rhodochrosite and was meant to cover three fingers.

This page, above: Smith's silver "Linked Oval" or "Elegant" necklace, circa 1974, features an amethyst quartz oval.

Below: The "Encaged Marble" necklace, circa 1972, contains a sphere of carnelian.



Left: Smith's surreal silver "Lava" cuff, circa 1946, can nearly cover a woman's entire forearm



Above and left: Smith used selective patination to give his "Modern Cuff," circa 1948, an even more striking silhouette.

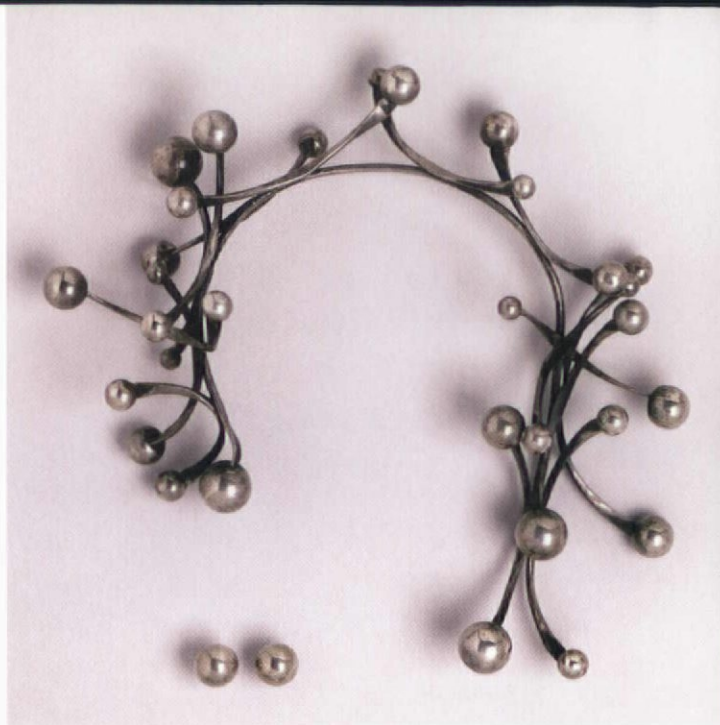


Born in Cuba and raised in Brooklyn, Smith studied sculpture at New York's Cooper Union (he was one of the first African-Americans to attend the university). Mulling a career path after college, he met jewelry designer Winifred Mason while both were doing volunteer work at the Children's Aid Society in Harlem. Smith trained in Mason's studio for several years, then in 1946 he opened his own shop on Cornelia Street in the Village. After a short while he moved to a space a few blocks north on West 4th Street, where he remained in business until 1979. A fervent devotee of jazz with an encyclopedic knowledge of the genre, Smith found his earliest and most loyal clients in the musical community. Although nearly all the pieces on display at the Brooklyn Museum are made of silver, Smith rarely worked in precious metals and gems at first, but rather in copper and brass. His pieces were affordable to those with slim wallets. In any case, Smith's designs "weren't about ostentation, or about being showy," McDonald says. "These pieces were meant to be badges of 'differentness,' proclaiming: 'I appreciate art but don't have to spend a lot of money to wear it around my neck.'"

About the time that Smith opened his shop and studio, several seminal museum exhibitions in the late 40s brought national attention to emerging modernist jewelers. In 1946, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized "Modern Handmade Jewelry," and two years later the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis inaugurated a series of shows called "Jewelry for Under \$50." There, Smith's pieces were presented alongside those by established artists such as Harry Bertoia and Alexander Calder, whose work had a strong influence on Smith and his peers.

Meanwhile, Smith was gaining a reputation among performing artists. His clients would come to include Lena Horne, Count Basie, the jazz pianist and composer Mary Lou Williams (for whom he designed a special set of jewelry called the "Zodiac" suite), Harry Belafonte, and the actor Brock Peters. Smith designed cuff links for Duke Ellington and a brooch for Eleanor Roosevelt, which was presented to the former First Lady by the Peekskill, New York, chapter of the NAACP. By the mid-1950s, Smith pieces began to be featured frequently in fashion magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

One of the proudest moments of Smith's life came in 1969, when New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts (later re-named the American Craft Museum and now called the Museum of Arts and Design) presented a solo exhibition of his work. In the catalogue for that show Smith explained his idea of his work's relation to the human form. "A piece of jewelry is in a sense an object that is not complete in itself," he wrote.



Above: The ebullient silver "Galaxy" necklace and earrings set was designed circa 1962, when space flight was the topic of the day.

"These pieces were meant to be badges of 'differentness,' proclaiming: 'I appreciate art but don't have to spend a lot of money to wear it around my neck.'"

—Mark McDonald

“You can look at Smith’s work as sculpture on an intimate scale.”

—Richard Wright

“Jewelry is a ‘what is it?’ until you relate it to the body.” Smith made much of the interplay of positive and negative space. For example his “Lava” cuff, a sleeve of silver with large biomorphic cut-outs, is transformed completely when placed on the arm.

Along with his designs and ephemera from his life—from period photographs to business cards to meticulously detailed account books—the Brooklyn installation includes thirty pieces of modernist studio jewelry from the museum’s collection, displayed to contextualize Smith’s place in the field. They range from a circa 1933 transitional Arts & Crafts-influenced necklace by Charles Price, who later taught metalwork at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, to a paper and silicone necklace made by Nel Linssen in 1995. One remarkable aspect is the relatively huge scale of Smith’s work. The sensuous, amoeba-like shapes of his “Ellington” necklace are oversized and bold; the “Lava” cuff could nearly cover an entire forearm. Harwood suggests that, because Smith worked for so many performers—in addition to jazz, he was a fan of modern dance and designed several pieces to be worn onstage—he wanted his pieces to have a dramatic effect even when seen at a distance. Another telling element is Smith’s use of patination. The shiny, delicate wire elements of his “Modern Cuff” stand out in sharp contrast to the darker ribbon of metal that forms the cuff’s interior bases. Shading on edges of the components of his “Linked Oval” necklace contribute to the elegance of the piece.

Among collectors, Wright says, “the whole modernist jewelry movement is still pretty obscure—outside of Calder, which is kind of a different thing. But I think people are starting to understand the significance of jewelry as a valid art form. There is a wonderful body of work from a host of artists who made what you can look at as sculpture on an intimate scale.” The results of a Wright auction last spring bear out his optimism. One of Smith’s “Patina” necklaces in sterling silver went for \$17,500, the highest amount any Smith piece has brought at Wright; a “Cluster Knuckles” ring,



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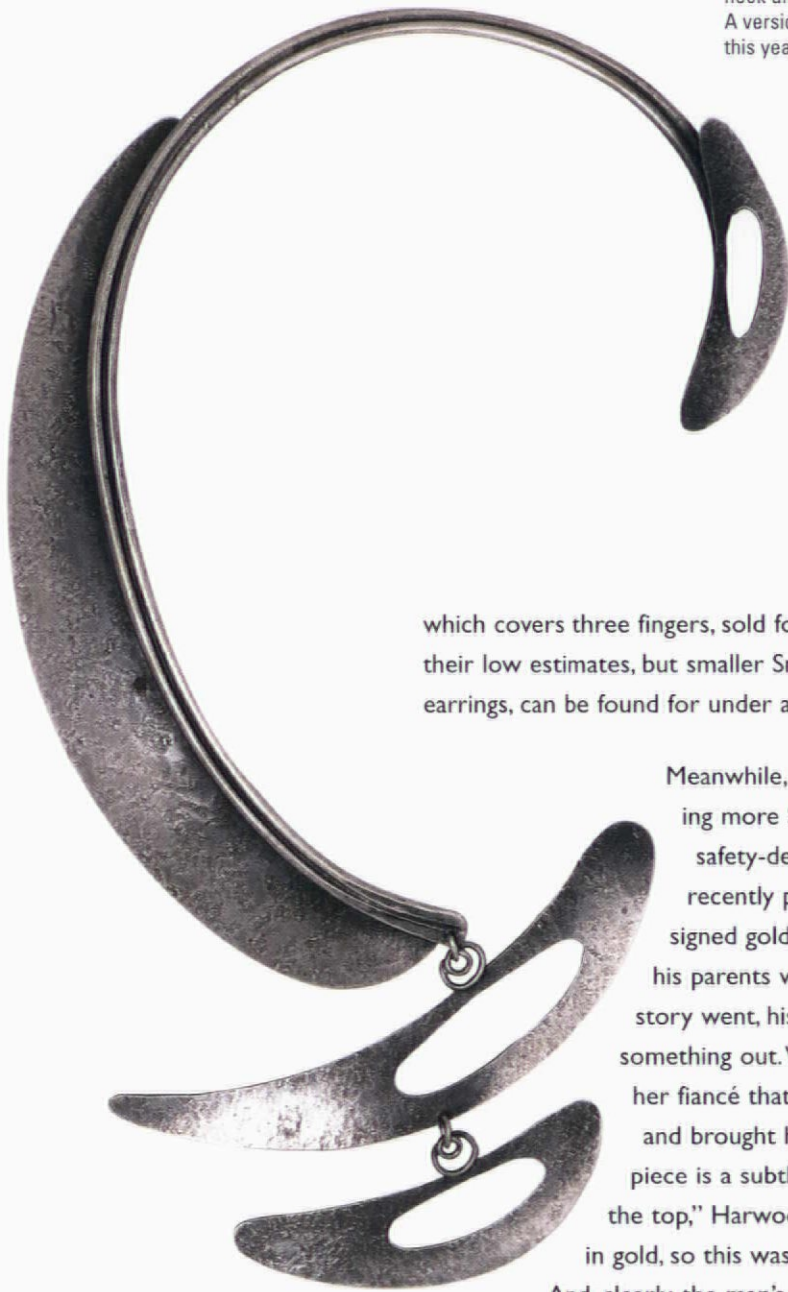
Right, above: The circa 1948 “Half & Half” necklace can be shortened or lengthened as the wearer wishes.

Right, below: Smith’s “Undulation” ring, circa 1961, is set with chrysocola, amethyst, and carnelian.

Below: The name and form of the circa 1962 “New Orleans” necklace was undoubtedly inspired by the jazz mecca’s nickname: the Crescent City.



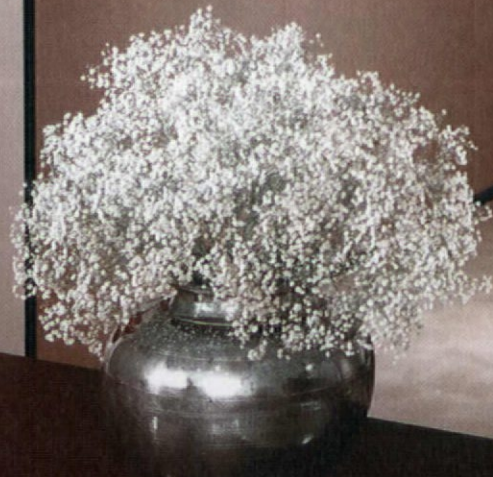
Left: The enormous and dramatic "Patina" necklace, circa 1959, loops around a wearer's neck and hangs nearly to her sternum. A version of this piece sold for \$17,500 earlier this year in an auction at Wright in Chicago.



which covers three fingers, sold for \$2,375. Both pieces more than doubled their low estimates, but smaller Smith designs in brass and copper, such as earrings, can be found for under a thousand dollars.

Meanwhile, the Brooklyn display is apparently drawing more Smith material out of jewelry cases and safety-deposit boxes. A man whose mother recently passed away came to Harwood with a signed gold wedding band designed by Smith. When his parents were getting married in the late 40s, the story went, his father took his mother to Tiffany to pick something out. When nothing caught her eye, she told her fiancé that she would show him what she wanted, and brought him downtown to Smith's shop. "The piece is a subtle, biomorphic band, slightly squared at the top," Harwood says. "In the 40s, Smith wasn't working in gold, so this was clearly a one-off special commission."

And, clearly, the man's father had taken to heart the lyrics to the Duke Ellington standard: "From my tender sentimental woes / That was my heart trying to compose / A prelude to a kiss."





Black Rock

at the Beginning

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Robert Damora's period photographs of Florence Knoll's interiors for the CBS Building are a captivating record of corporate culture in the '60s

BY DONALD ALBRECHT



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Preceding pages: A view of the meeting area at the rear of a screening theater on the 34th floor of the CBS Building. Note how Damora composed the photo with the circular forms of the platter, side table, and large table in alignment.

Above: The private conference room attached to the office of Jack Schneider, head of the CBS Broadcast Group. The painting is by Hans Hoffman.

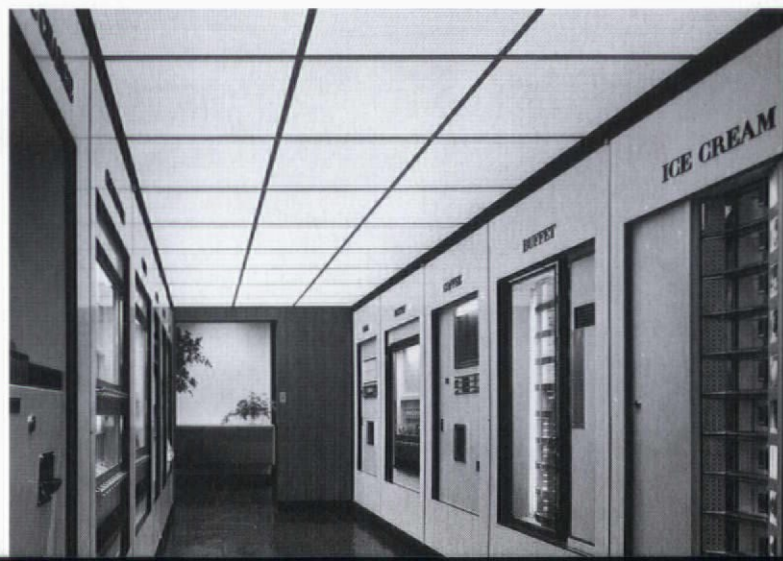
Left: The corner office of Frank Stanton, president of the CBS corporation, as seen from the reception area. The four segments of the ceiling arc gently to form a shallow dome. Stanton's suite included a conference room, a private dining room, kitchen, and bathroom.

"The inside of CBS is a solid gold corporate cliché; a lavish cocoon," New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable wrote in 1966, the year the broadcasting company was moving into its new corporate tower in midtown Manhattan. Seemingly designed to insulate executives from the tumultuous times—protests against the war in Vietnam, explosive race relations, and a psychedelic and sexually open youth culture—CBS's interiors exude the detached perfection so lovingly re-created on today's hit television series *Mad Men*. On the show, a Madison Avenue advertising agency, not unlike CBS in design, serves as the buttoned-up backdrop to the increasingly unhinged antics of employees making the bumpy transition from the cool Fifties to the hot Sixties.

The structured glamour of CBS's interiors, designed under the direction of Florence Knoll Bassett, was best captured by photographer Robert Damora. Although Damora, who died this year at age 97, photographed buildings for architects such as Paul Rudolph, I. M. Pei, and Eero Saarinen—designer of the CBS Building, now commonly known as "Black Rock"—Florence Knoll proved his most collaborative client. The photographer's widow, Sirkka Damora, says that her husband admired Knoll as a master of modernist stagecraft. In creating his photographs Damora gave Knoll the unheard-of right to look through his camera's viewfinder and make suggestions on the placement of accessories and decorative elements.

The CBS shoot was the culmination of a long association between the two. It had begun in 1948, when he photographed the Madison Avenue showroom she had designed for the furniture company that bears her name. Damora and Knoll, who was born in 1917, were ideally suited to each other through their commitment to architectural modernism. Damora established himself as a photographer before World War II and received his master's degree in architecture from Yale in 1953. Knoll earned her master's degree at the Illinois Institute of Technology, where she studied under Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Mies's influence is present in

Right: An Automat-like food vending machine corridor located near the CBS employee cafeteria.



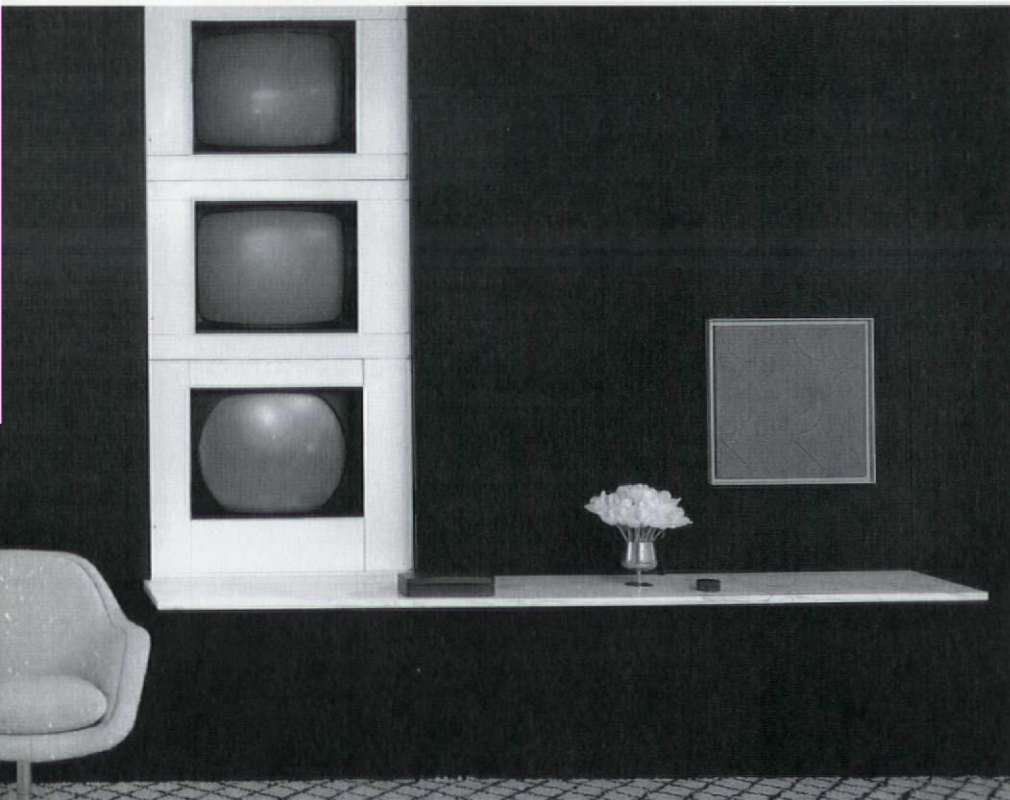
CBS's artful and asymmetrical flow of space, minimalist form, and lush materials. Classic furniture designed by Mies before World War II, and reintroduced by Knoll, and chairs designed by Saarinen and manufactured by Knoll, complemented Florence Knoll's own, more severe furniture designs. Knoll also made sure that all the paraphernalia of a modern broadcast firm office—from telephones as televisions and speakers—could slide out of sight into custom desks and credenzas.

The exacting nature of Knoll's interior design was met by the exacting process of taking the photographs. Damora and his assistant, David Crofoot, worked for six months, during which they struggled to produce color photographs that correctly rendered the interiors' hues. CBS had a new lighting system that gave off a type of light incompatible with Damora's film. As a result, innumerable tests were required with different color-correction filters on the lens and even on the building's windows.

Below: A stacked trio of television monitors in Schneider's office. Florence Knoll designed the diamond-patterned carpet.

Opposite page: Knoll decided that the color scheme for each floor would be announced in its reception area. The 11th floor features a mix of browns and neutral hues, as seen in a rosewood wall, a Mies van der Rohe "Barcelona" settee and ottoman, and a sofa and marble-top tables designed by Knoll herself.


The CBS Building was one of Saarinen's last commissions; he invited Knoll to create the building's interiors shortly before his death in 1961. To honor the Saarinen/Knoll/Damora collaboration, many of the photographs will be shown publicly for the first time in the New York City presentation of the exhibition *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, running at the Museum of the City of New York from November 10, 2009 through January 31, 2010.



Donald Albrecht, Curator of Architecture and Design for the Museum of the City of New York, is the organizer of the New York edition of the upcoming Saarinen exhibition.

Photographs provided courtesy of Sirkka Damora.





BY IAN PHILLIPS

A Brief
Shining Moment

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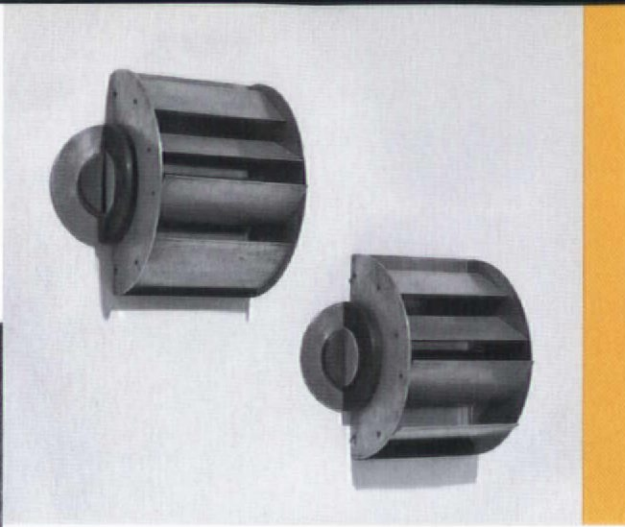
IN THE LATE 1920s, JACQUES LE CHEVALLIER TOOK A SHORT HIATUS FROM HIS WORK IN STAINED GLASS, AND DESIGNED SOME OF THE MOST ARRESTING, AVANT-GARDE LIGHTING PIECES OF THE CENTURY



Opposite page: A table lamp composed of semicircular planes of aluminum, with accents in ebonite, designed by Le Chevallier between 1927 and 1930. An example of this piece is in the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Above, top: A pair of aluminum and ebonite sconces designed in 1930.

Above: Le Chevallier at work on a stained-glass project, circa 1955.



When French twentieth-century design dealer Denis Doria was a young boy in Paris in the 1960s, he would often run across an elderly gentleman named Jacques Le Chevallier. At the time, Le Chevallier was director of the Centre d'Art Sacré, in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés district. "For me," Doria recalls, "he was simply the local drawing teacher."

Only later did Doria discover that Le Chevallier was much, much more. An accomplished artist, born in Paris in 1896, Le Chevallier was a famed creator of modernist stained-glass windows. He was an illustrator who designed tapestry patterns for Aubusson and wallpaper for the firm Nobilis. In 1929, Le Chevallier became, along with such design luminaries as Jean Puiforcat, Charlotte Perriand, Robert Mallett-Stevens, and René Herbst, a founding member of the Union des Artistes Modernes—an association of progressive architects and designers formed to advance the cause of modernism. But what most intrigues curators and collectors today is an odd blip in Le Chevallier's career: between 1926 and 1932, in collaboration with engineer René Koechlin, he designed a series of strikingly avant-garde lamps—hard-edged and planar, and made largely of aluminum. Doria says: "They're more like sculptures than lighting."

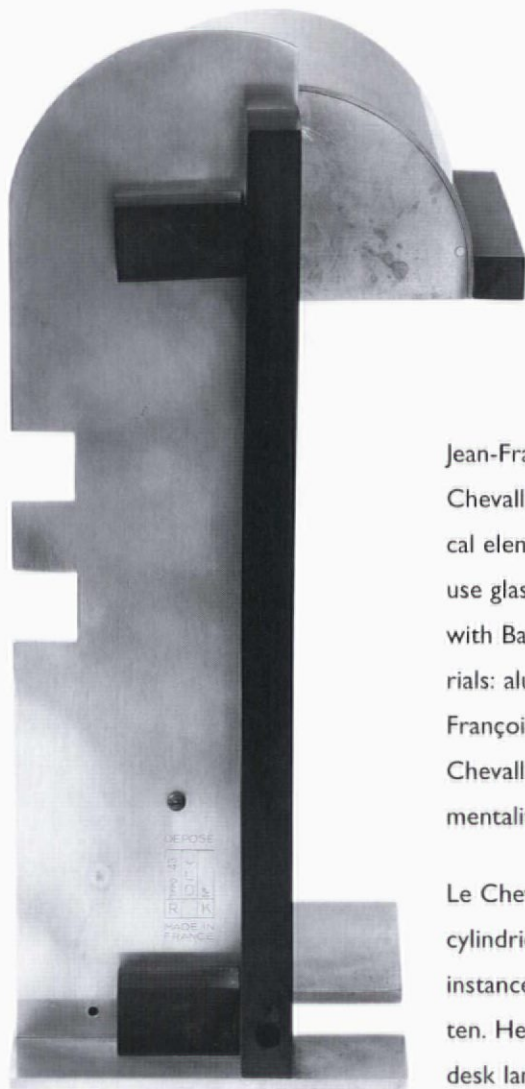
That artfulness, if not the forms and materials, was in keeping with the spirit of Le Chevallier's career. He studied at Paris's *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs*, and strived to become recognized as a painter. Although Le Chevallier was exhibited besides the likes of Fernand Léger and Maurice Denis at the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, he was most noted for his work in glass. In 1920, he joined the Parisian studio of Louis Barillet, the man largely responsible for revolutionizing the field in the first half of the twentieth century. "Barillet and his excellent colleagues have given stained glass a new life," wrote the architect Mallet-Stevens. "They have created a new technique, which has inspired numerous artists and gained quite a following." One of Barillet's most innovative steps was to play with texture rather

Clockwise from top left: Le Chevallier windows in the cathedral of Beauvais, France; Le Chevallier experimenting with a leading technique in an undated photograph; a detail of a Le Chevallier nativity scene.

than color. In one window, some of the panes might be ribbed, others frosted, and yet others engraved in tight patterns. Barillet's studio worked on commissions for the Aga Khan, fashion designer Paul Poiret, and on the Paris building that housed artist Tamara de Lempicka's studio.

Le Chevallier stayed with Barillet until 1946, when at age 50, he set up his own atelier. The majority of his output was religious—he was a devout Catholic—and today, his stained glass can be found in 113 cathedrals, churches, and chapels, among them Notre-Dame de Paris. Perhaps his most beautiful designs are the most abstract: his crisscrossed compositions for Laon Cathedral in the Picardie region are particularly breathtaking, and the swirling, primary-colored forms at the Cathédrale Saint-Jean in Besançon, France, are reminiscent of a Matisse collage.

While it is hard to reconcile such work with the aesthetic sensibility that created the spare, geometric lamps of the '20s and '30s, the lighting designs are perfectly in keeping with formal modernism's concern for function. "The emphasis was placed on the way the lamps were assembled," says



Above: Two views of a Le Chevallier bedside lamp, designed in 1928. Note the hallmark on the larger photo, which bears the initials of both Le Chevallier and his collaborating fabricator, engineer René Koechlin.



Jean-François Archieri, author of the only existing monograph on Le Chevallier. “You can see the bolts, the screws, the articulations. The technical elements were not hidden.” Archieri believes Le Chevallier chose not to use glass in his lighting pieces in order to set them apart from his work with Barillet. Instead, he opted for purely industrial, non-transparent materials: aluminum, aluminum alloy, and a hardened rubber called ebonite. To François Tajan, co-chairman of the Paris-based auction house Artcurial, “Le Chevallier made objects like architects built houses. He had that modernist mentality that placed him above fads.”

Le Chevallier favored indirect lighting and endowed his lamps with semi-cylindrical reflectors and partial screens. Sconces and ceiling lamps, for instance, had slits cut into aluminum panels through which light would glisten. He was also one of the first to create lights for a specific place. One desk lamp incorporates a pencil holder; a dressing table lamp is connected to a mirror. Of his 20 designs, two stand out. The first is “Chistera,” named for the jai alai basket that the lamp’s arced form resembles. The second consists of different interlocking semi-circular planes that look rather like a deconstructed, Cubist globe.

One fan of the latter was photojournalist Thérèse Bonney, a friend of Picasso and lover of Raoul Dufy, who did much to promote French art and architecture in the States. The sculptors Jan and Joël Martel had Le Chevallier lights in their studio. Mallet-Stevens not only had one on his desk but also commissioned sconces for the entrance hall of the Villa Cavrois and lighting for the Delza shop on Paris’s Rue de la Paix.

Right: The "Chistera" lamp, designed by Le Chevallier circa 1929 and named for the French word for the curved wicker throwing mitt used in the game jai alai.



But Le Chevallier and Koechlin's lamps were not a commercial success. One contemporary critic described them as "devices that are rational, but too disdainful of seduction." They sold no more than 80 examples of any one

model and production was no doubt stopped due to the paucity of orders. Le Chevallier, who died in 1987, apparently didn't think his lighting designs were of much importance either. "At the end of his life, he was very annoyed if you talked to him about them," recalls Doria. "For him, they were trifles. He placed much more importance on his painting."

Today's aficionados of modern design feel otherwise. Le Chevallier lighting pieces have recently made their way into a number of international museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has one of his Cubist globe lamps, and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh has three different models. The design market has noticed, too. Doria says that when he started buying Le Chevallier lamps at the beginning of the '80s, they traded in the range of \$200 to \$1,000. Sotheby's sold one of the spherical plane

lamps for \$84,000 in 2007. At Artcurial in Paris

last November, a "Chistera" table lamp was nabbed for \$51,000. It is, of course, a sad thing when an artist is not recognized during his or her

life. Sadder still, perhaps, is the artist who never recognized the magnitude of his own creative force.

Ian Phillips is a Paris-based writer



Above: Two Le Chevallier-designed sconces. The example on the left is a 1928 original; the other is an '80s custom reproduction.

LE CHEVALLIER'S DESIGNS ARE HARD-EDGED, PLANAR, AND MADE LARGELY OF ALUMINUM. "THEY ARE MORE LIKE SCULPTURES THAN LIGHTING," says Paris design dealer Denis Doria



Photo courtesy of the Geoffrey Diner Gallery

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Left: Likely Le Chevallier's most severe, Constructivist piece, this aluminum and ebonite table lamp was designed circa 1928.

The Young and the Restless

BY WILLIAM L. HAMILTON

Still in its infancy,
the market for
contemporary
“design art” by
little-known talents has
already become a force

At the last Design Miami/Basel, the influential design fair staged twice a year, half of the twenty-eight galleries exhibiting were showing contemporary design. Until recently a showcase heavily tilted toward blue-chip vintage modern design, Design Miami/Basel gave collectors visiting Switzerland this June a chance to see—side by side in adjacent booths, or within a single gallery—work by accepted twentieth-century masters like George Nakashima, Jean Royère, and Frank Lloyd Wright sharing floor space with pieces by freshly-minted stars like Max Lamb and Nacho Carbonell. Vintage design won honors for most money earned. The top sale: approximately \$674,000 for a Royère “Polar Bear” sofa with two matching club chairs, circa 1957, sold to an American collector by Jacques Lacoste, a Paris dealer. But contemporary design walked away with the buzz: \$137,000 for three pieces by a Rotterdam-based design firm, Atelier van Lieshouten, sold by Carpenters Workshop Gallery of London. The buyer? Brad Pitt. The actor also paid Milan’s Galleria Rossana Orlandi \$118,000 for everything available from Carbonell’s metal and papier-mâché “Evolution” collection.

Design Miami/Basel—even with no-shows by several notable American galleries—still provided a good opportunity to assess the current state of the modern design market—one, like all markets, badly shaken by the global recession. For collectors there is now indecision, if not panic. The conservative approach, though increasingly expensive, continues to be to buy work by twentieth-century designers like Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand, names “branded” by the market and firm members of the modernist canon. Other collectors, looking for entrepreneurial opportunity, are trading in futures: purchasing cheaper work by living, relatively unknown designers, betting that, with the right publicity and track record, the designer’s reputation will grow and tender a handsome return on the investment. And these collectors can play at being patrons.

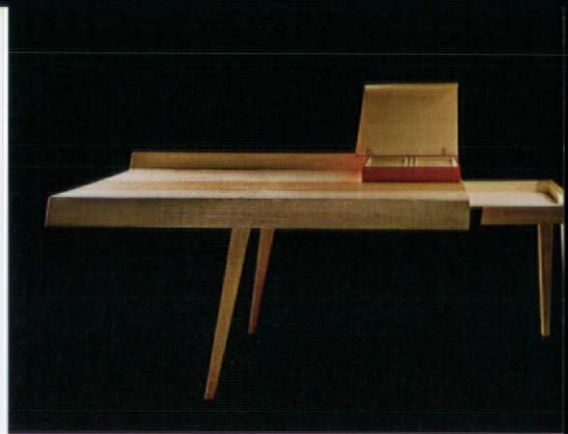


Photo: courtesy of Meta, a Mallett company



Far left: The ashwood “Glissade” desk—with its top pushed to the side to reveal a hidden compartment—designed by Wales & Wales for Meta, a contemporary furniture collection launched last year by the British antiques firm Mallett.

Near left: New York dealer Todd Merrill’s new “Studio Contemporary” gallery opened with the show of work by the Irish designer-craftsman Joseph Walsh.

A large and diverse group of dealers is now seriously strategizing the contemporary design market, as collectors show a taste for it.

“New,” word has it, is the next “modern.” In Manhattan, Todd Merrill, an ambitious dealer known for vintage twentieth-century design, opened a second gallery in July to exhibit what he calls “Studio Contemporary,” a continuing series of new designs. The opening act was Joseph Walsh—an attractive thirty-year-old Irishman who makes exquisitely rendered wood furniture, affixed with metal tags that verify the uniqueness of each work. With this, Merrill joins other New York dealers like Cristina Grajales and Paul Johnson, who show both vintage and contemporary designers at their galleries. Last year, Mallett, the stately English antiques firm established in 1865, essentially leap-frogged the twentieth century and introduced Meta, a new collection of signature contemporary pieces, produced to order, by stylish Salone di Mobile designers like Tord Boontje, Mattali Crasset, and the duo Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby.

Tactically, the move into contemporary design makes sense. Great vintage material is drying up, while escalating prices are driving too much merely good material into the market, threatening to devalue everything. Owners of top vintage works are demanding prices that cut deeply into dealers’ profits. Everyone is paying more, and there’s less than ever to be had.

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Below: Jeroen Verhoeven’s 2005 “Cinderella” table was offered in an edition of six by Carpenters Workshop Gallery of London. The piece is marble, carved and hollowed so that its edges match the front and side profile of a Louis XV commode.





By comparison, contemporary design looks like a fountain of youth: a geyser of material by working designers, perpetually fresh and potentially expensive. Why wait for time to vindicate—and value—design?

The present market for high-end contemporary design is not quite four years old, appearing in December 2005 with the launch of Design Miami—an instantly popular adjunct to the successful Art Basel Miami Beach fair. Contemporary design, an avant-garde upstart, looked like a natural cousin to contemporary art. While most dealers at Design Miami showed high-end vintage material—priced like art, not design—others like Galerie Kreo of Paris and Barry Friedman of New York featured art-like limited editions by established contemporary designers such as Ron Arad and Marc Newson.

Auction houses had also entered the game, inviting art buyers to sales of design, both vintage and contemporary. But what seemed like an excellent shopping adventure for collectors—newly manufactured important design, sold at list price like art, straight from the atelier—hit retail reality in 2008 when the economy collapsed. Suddenly, limited-edition design looked more parvenu than ingénue. And designers like Arad, the subject of a Museum of Modern Art retrospective on view in New York through October 19, and Newson, whose “Lockheed Lounge” sold for \$1.6 million at a Phillips de Pury auction in London this April, aren’t interested in being bargains.

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Above: A 2007 dining table incorporating a lazy susan, designed by Martino Gamper for Nilufar Editions of Milan, is a “re-envisioning” of a 1960 Gio Ponti design.

Below: Eindhoven design school graduate Wouter Scheublin’s “Walking Table”—outfitted with twin pairs of legs that allow the piece to take “steps” when pushed—was introduced at last June’s Design Miami/Basel exhibition by the Dutch gallery Priveekollektie.





Above: Vincent Dubourg's 2007 "Napoléon à Trotinette" console, composed of cast bronze and steel components, is a hybrid of man-made and natural forms.

Photo: courtesy of Carpenters Workshop Gallery

"Design Miami was a graveyard after the art market crashed in 2008," said James Zemaitis, head of Sotheby's twentieth-century design department in New York. "A good two-thirds of the dealers were caught trying to sell primary-market contemporary designers at secondary-market prices. They hadn't adjusted, and there were acres of stuff that wasn't moving."

What is frequently called "design art" has gained traction though. A month after dealers mounted a critical mass of it in Basel, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London opened "Telling Tales." On view through October 18, the exhibition is described in press materials as a display of "works of so-called 'design art,' made in small editions." It includes pieces from Mallet's Meta collection as well as design by Sebastian Brajkovic, Tomás Gabzdil Libertiny, Maarten Baas, and others whose work was on sale in Basel.

"Telling Tales" is crucial intellectual ballast for people like Loïc Le Gaillard, co-owner of Carpenters Workshop Gallery, which advertises itself as specializing in limited-edition works from "the converging fields of art and design." Le Gaillard says, "Our approach to design is a contemporary art approach. In the end, you're looking at a design piece, but more appropriately, a functional sculpture. The boundary should be as blurred as possible." He claims the gallery has made sales to the Centre Georges Pompidou, the Victoria & Albert, and the Museum of Modern Art. The audience for "functional artwork" was larger than he expected it to be, Le Gaillard says, explaining that, even in the current economy, "rich people still want to be able to differentiate themselves from the guy next door. They're happy to pay a premium for that."

David McFadden, chief curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, says of design's art ambitions, "The marketing value of the word 'art' cannot be denied. It's still the capital A."



Clockwise, this page and opposite: Four views of Tord Boontje's "The Fig Leaf" from Meta: a nearly seven-foot tall armoire formed by a capsule of 614 enameled leaf forms precisely attached to a bronze tracery frame (see detail, below, opposite page) that surrounds a cast-bronze "tree" on which clothes are hung.

The collecting audience is responding. "The field is super competitive now," says Paul Johnson, whose Johnson Trading Gallery began showing pieces by contemporary designers like Aranda/Lasch, a New York architectural studio, in 2005. "Now there are cutthroat contemporary dealers, scrounging at schools. They go to Eindhoven"—a reference to the prestigious Dutch design academy—"and commission one-off works from students right after they graduate. It's a hard game to compete in."

Designers who want to be artists, or craftsmen who want to be designers, are hoping to make the perceptual crossover too, while the iron is hot. By showing his work at Todd Merrill's new gallery, Joseph Walsh hopes that the change in venue will represent a change in audience and appreciation. Walsh exhibited previously at SOFA, or Sculptural Objects and Functional Art—touring fairs held annually in New York, Chicago and elsewhere, which, despite the title, are regarded as crafts exhibitions.

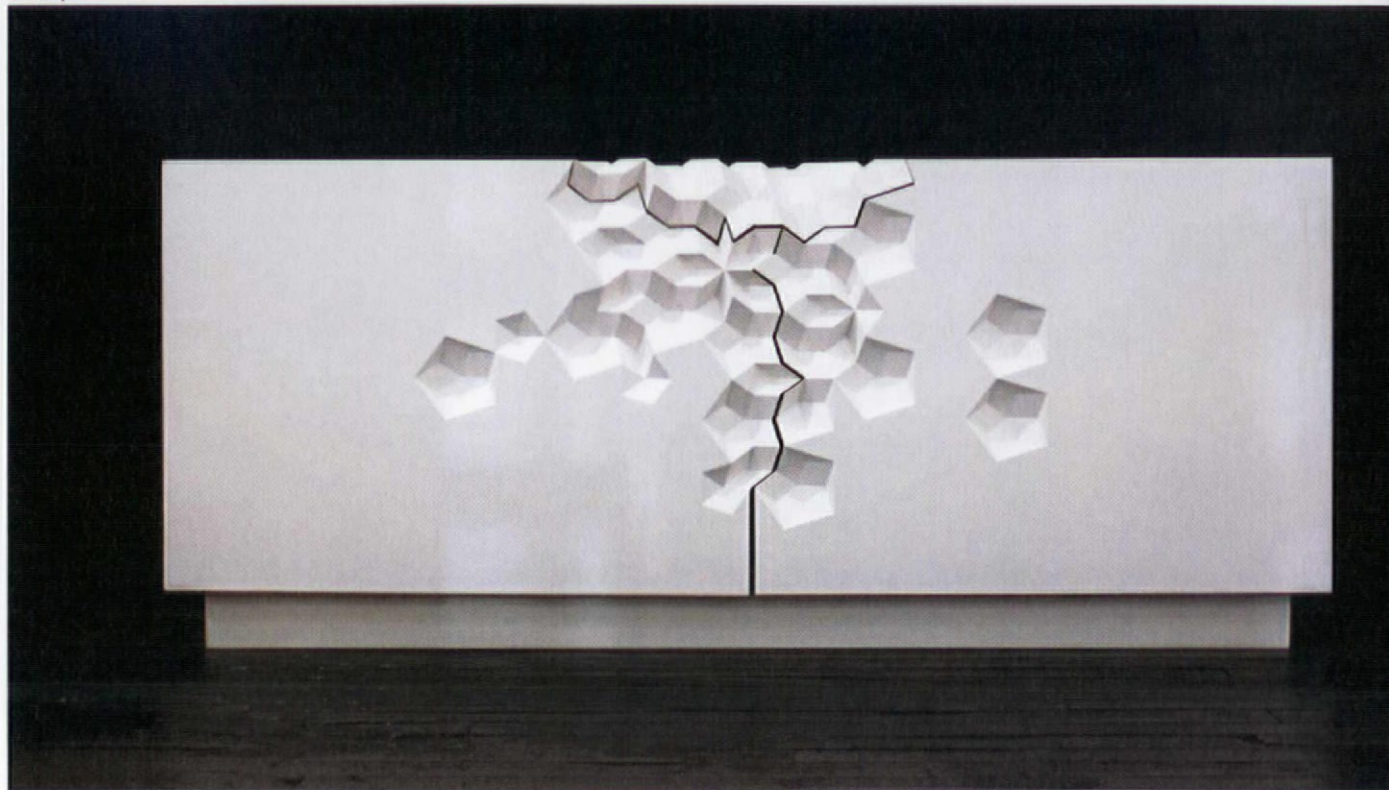
Walsh is a member of "the next generation of studio artists," says Merrill, who has priced the Irishman's "San Martin" table, an aerodynamic piece made of French walnut, at \$75,000, in an edition of twelve. "It's still a decorative arts market, even if contemporary art collectors are buying in it. I don't want something that's disconnected between concept and craftsmanship. If it's high-concept but not beautifully produced—or functional—it won't have lasting value."



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Below: The “Quasi Cabinet” by the New York design studio Aranda/Lasch, made of lacquered greenboard—a gypsum-based construction material—is on offer from the Johnson Trading Gallery.



Since the economic scare, dealers in “design art” seem to be backpedaling from “art” towards “design” by stressing that the work is useful, well made, and reasonably priced for fine furniture.

An eight-example edition of Eindhoven graduate Wouter Scheublin’s “Walking Table”—yes, it “walks” when pushed—was sold at Basel by Priveekollektie, a gallery based in the Dutch city of Heusden, for roughly \$30,000 per piece. Miriam van Dijk, one of the gallery’s owners, explained that Scheublin puts hundreds of hours into each table. “Collectors now want design that’s clearly design,” she says. “Functionality is coming back. It’s a chair, it’s a table. It’s a chair to sit on to look at a painting. It makes it very clear—especially for investment—that it’s design.”

Contemporary design is still finding its feet, though, as a mature collecting market. In June, Sotheby’s sale of “Important 20th Century Design” brought in proceeds above expectations—in an indication of recovery. Yet the auction house failed to sell the catalogue cover lot: a unique stainless-steel bench by Frank Gehry that Zemaitis helped the architect bring to market. Generally, Zemaitis says, he has learned his lesson. “I prefer to only look at the seminal things” in the contemporary design field, he says—meaning work that has a history at auction. Zemaitis adds that he would not sell new work without assurance that the piece is unique, or that the



Left: Max Lamb's "Delaware Bluestone Slice Bench," is a unique piece designed in 2008 and machine-fabricated from stone quarried in the Catskill Mountains.



Above: The "Lathe Chair VIII" by Sebastian Brajkovic is a piece of functional sculpture based on computer experiments with nineteenth-century furniture. The chair frames are made of cast bronze, while the upholstery was digitally designed, creating a marriage of old and new.



Above: The "Cidade" candelabra from Meta, designed by the team Barber Osgerby, is composed of seven candleholders—made of a grade of silver even finer than sterling—affixed to a silver and pearwood base.

edition that it is a part of is sold and closed. "Auction houses have no business going there," he says of material that is still for sale and proliferating in the primary market.

As a cautionary tale, he cited recent furniture designs by architect Zaha Hadid. "She embraced the limited-edition process with fervor, in my opinion," Zemaitis says. "She signed up with not one but three galleries. Suddenly there were—I'm exaggerating, but it seemed like—five hundred pieces designed by Zaha, in editions of twenty or thirty and priced at six figures.

Galleries at Design Miami were competing to sell her work—a gigantic red flag—then the auction houses jumped in. It was a nightmare."

Meta, the contemporary collection by Mallett, may become another tale of woe. Well-executed in rich materials, Meta pieces aspire to be carriage-trade furniture, in the best bespoke tradition. Introduced in April 2008, Meta hopes to show a profit by the end of this year. The project has lost several million dollars, a shortfall characterized in an investors' report as a result of development, marketing, and production costs. Eleonore Halluitte, Meta's production manager, says Mallett has met its sales targets, and that it is committed to a second collection, planned for next year, but will scale back the number of designs offered. Meta's buyers, Halluitte explains, are typically Mallett customers looking for strong pieces with which to furnish, much as they would with antiques. Nothing less, nothing more. "The motive is practicality," Halluitte says.

Below: Joseph Walsh's "Sanagi" table, made of walnut and lacewood, is one of the showstoppers at Todd Merrill's "Studio Contemporary" gallery.





Left and above: Two views of the Mnemos_03 jewelry box—made of vermeil (gilded silver) with interior satinwood compartments—designed by the New York architecture and design firm Asymptote for Meta.

Collectors would do well to remember what experts advise in any category, art or design, vintage or contemporary: buy what you like, and you will never be disappointed with what you have, if other motives like investment ultimately fail to deliver.

Colleen Sullivan, a Chicago lawyer, has been furnishing her home with vintage and contemporary design for the past several years. She buys what she likes.

Sullivan hesitates to characterize herself as a collector, though she owns pieces by Jean Royère, Joseph Frank, and Charlotte Perriand, has shopped Design Miami/Basel, the auction houses, galleries such as Moss in New York, and has also purchased contemporary pieces including a Max Lamb chair and a Patrick Jouin stool. She studied art history before turning to law and says she can't be concerned about the investment potential of something she considers, without much discussion, furniture. Sullivan couldn't care less about the posturing and positioning of design as art. "I spent too long in graduate school with these issues," she says. "If you buy a suit, you buy something you can afford, can appreciate, and will use. I know some of the pieces I've bought have been mistakes. But I still love them."

William L. Hamilton is a New York journalist who writes often about design.

In Belgium, a new museum by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Christian de Portzamparc celebrates the career of the beloved illustrator Hergé

Tintin

and the Riddle of the Golden Ratio

When clients want whimsy from an architect, you wouldn't think they'd turn to a winner of the Pritzker Prize, an award that generally acknowledges sober and cerebral work. But in his design for a new museum dedicated to the Belgian cartoonist Hergé, France's Christian de Portzamparc—who took the Pritzker in 1994—has infused the building with a spirit as lighthearted as the adventures of Hergé's most beloved character, Tintin. Located about 20 miles southeast of Brussels on the outskirts of Louvain-la-Neuve—a recently developed, pedestrian-only university town—the 38,750-square-foot white concrete, steel, and glass museum floats like a ship coming into port on a surrounding sea of oak forest. The structure's clean lines have the same originality as the architect's acclaimed Cité de la Musique in Paris, as well as the elegance that characterizes all his work—from midtown Manhattan's LVMH tower to his stunning Philharmonic hall in Luxembourg. But here the emphasis is on fantasy and fun.

Visitors arrive at the museum across a long wooden footbridge that reinforces the maritime impression, and seems like an invitation to join the intrepid cub reporter and his dog, Snowy, for the kind of globe-trotting excitement that has sold more than 200 million books in 80 languages worldwide. (Tintin will come to the big screen in 2011, when the first installment of director Steven Spielberg's planned trilogy hits theaters.)

The design, the architect says, was born from his childhood memories of the comic. "I now realize that my primary architectural motifs are inspired by the men-of-war ships [from the Tintin tale "The Secret of the Unicorn"], and the boats, yachts, junks, dhows, and cargo steamers that sail through the adventures of Tintin, Snowy, and Captain Haddock [Tintin's oft-inebriated sea captain sidekick]," he says.

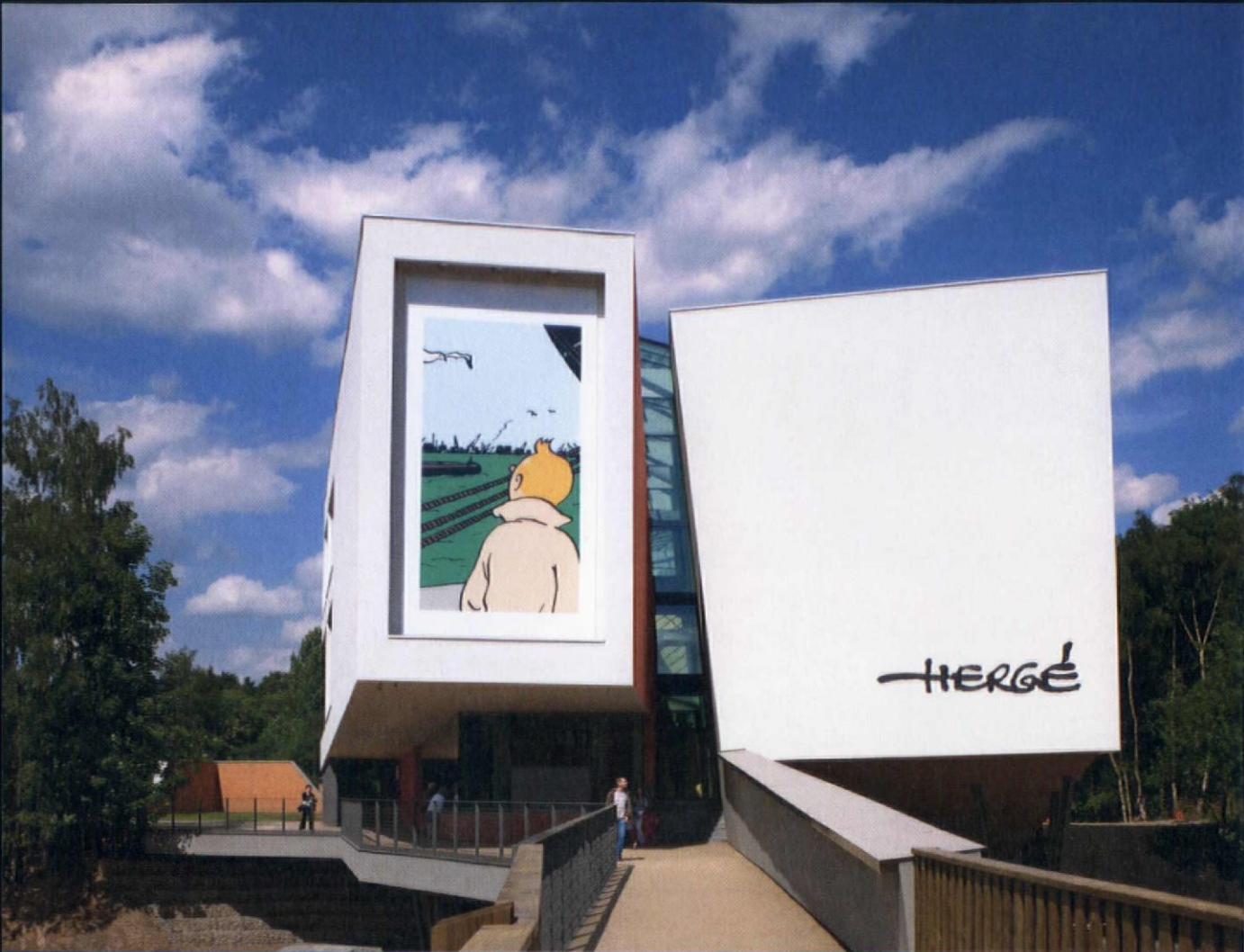
A visitor is meant to experience "the sensation of entering not a museum in the classic sense, but the universe of Hergé in all its breadth, diversity, and complexity."

—architect Christian de Portzamparc



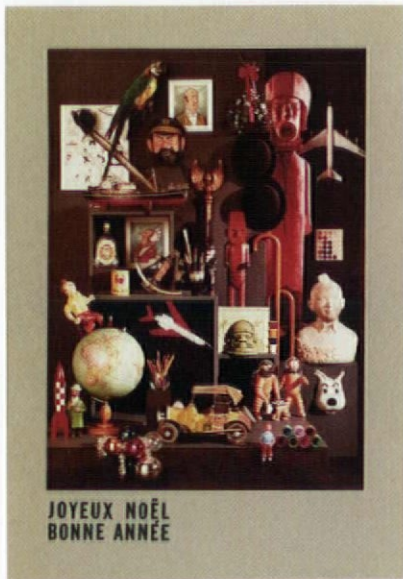
Opposite page, top: A view of the the double-barreled museum entrance. The image of Tintin, on the left façade is taken from "The Crab with the Golden Claws."

Opposite page, below: Portzamparc's intention was that the museum's vast bay windows resemble comic strip panels.



Photos : © Nicolas Borel, courtesy of Atelier Christian de Portzamparc 2009

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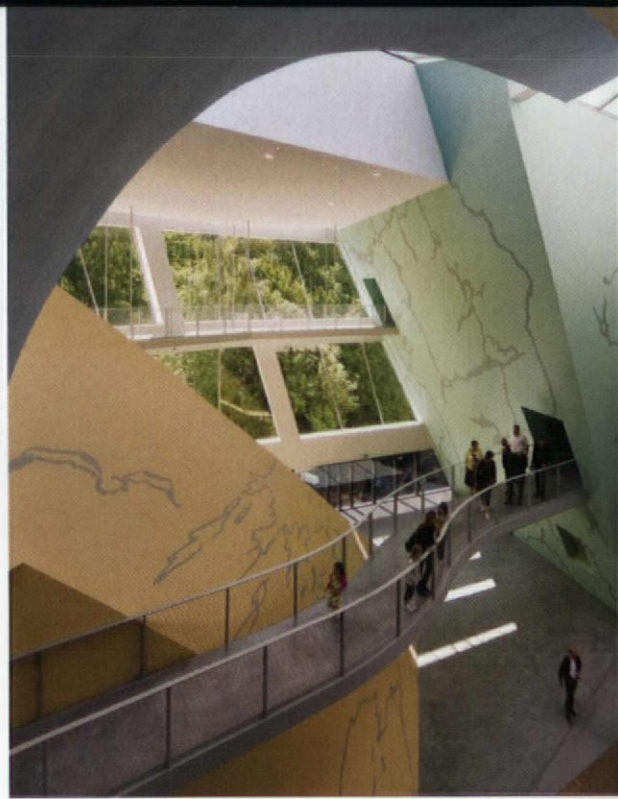
Above: The museum collection includes a holiday greeting card from Studios Hergé, sent out in 1969, which is illustrated with objects inspired by various adventures of Tintin.

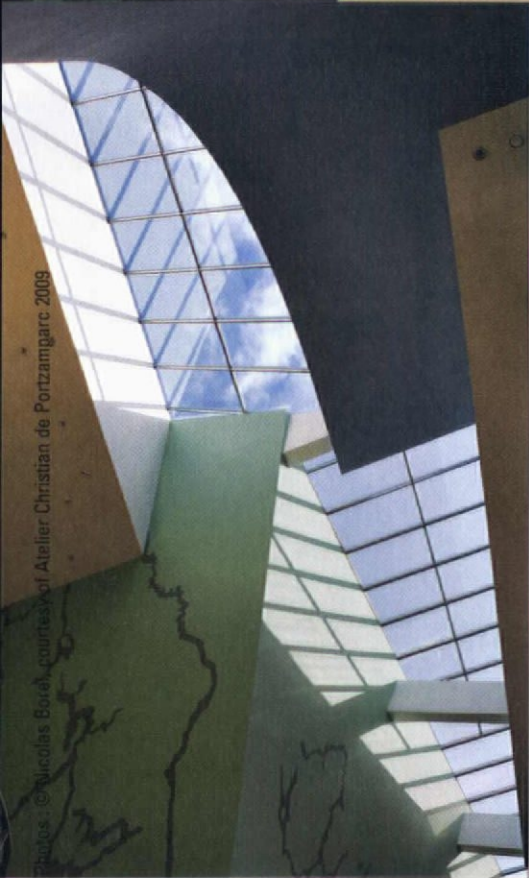
Continuing the allusion, Portzamparc likens the building, which is split into two parts, to a ship beached on the shore. On one side of the façade, Tintin is pictured on a quay looking out to sea, an image taken from the book "The Crab with the Golden Claws"; on the other, there is Hergé's signature (the pen name of Georges Rémi), a reminder that there is more to the artist than just the illustrated exploits of his young hero.

From the exterior, massive windows resemble comic strip panels and reveal colorful scenes inside. Once through the off-center, low-key entrance, the visitor steps into a soaring, three-level-high atrium flooded with light. Portzamparc aims to give "the sensation of entering not a museum in the classic sense but the universe of Hergé in all its breadth, diversity, and complexity."

Intriguing pastel islands of curved walls divide the reception area and define the 22,000 square feet of collection spaces on the two levels above. Walking through this dreamlike landscape is like jumping into the pages of a 3-D comic book: one red rectangular block evokes the skyscrapers of "Tintin in America;" an ochre rounded form represents the terrain of "King Ottokar's Sceptre," while a pale-blue shape is the color of the sea in "The Crab with the Golden Claws." Visitors ascend to the permanent collection in an elevator whose tower is painted midnight blue and white in a checkerboard pattern similar to Tintin's red-and-white rocket in "Destination Moon."

Interior designer Winston Spriet, who also masterminded the layout of the new René Magritte museum in Brussels, and cartoonist Joost Swarte (whose style, familiar to readers of *The New Yorker*, owes much to Hergé) arranged artifacts from the Hergé Foundation collection in eight permanent exhibition rooms. Light is filtered to protect the 80 original comic-strip panels and 800 documents, photos, and objects. To avoid creating "an obscure labyrinth," Portzamparc linked the four separate





pairs of rooms with metal walkways that crisscross the atrium, offering luminous vistas through to the greenery outdoors.

Footbridges link the four exhibition spaces and the elevator shaft. Each gallery has its own personality, and is decorated with motifs that refer to visual themes in the Tintin books.

Hergé's widow, Fanny Rodwell, commissioned the \$28 million edifice to pay tribute to all aspects of her husband's talents. There are examples of his graphic designs, such as posters for winter sports destinations and an ad for a giraffe toy drawn for a Brussels department store. But Tintin is the star. The galleries devoted to him begin on the third floor, and visitors move downward from level to level, through exhibition spaces that demonstrate how the strips were produced. Original panels dating from 1926 depict prototype heroes

who gradually morph into the familiar bright-eyed blond reporter with a distinctive quiff of hair who appears in the first adventure, 1930's "Tintin in the Land of the Soviets," a book published when the cartoonist was only 22 years old.

There is more here than documents. A full-size model of the two-man shark-shaped submarine from "Red Rackham's Treasure" hangs from the ceiling; Errol Flynn pirate movies, Marx Brothers farces, *King Kong*, and Orson Welles films—all influences on Hergé's storytelling style—flicker from small screens. Vitrines display a Chinese lantern, South American idols, a frightening Peruvian mummy, and other exotica that Hergé studied to lend authentic atmosphere to tales set in distant countries he rarely traveled to himself.

A re-creation of the artist's studio with its original drawing table shows a photo of a tall, thin young man described by a friend as "cheerful, optimistic, with bright mischievous eyes." Hergé once described how he created: "I always work to music—my own," he said, "whistling Debussy, Léo Ferré, and other tunes."

On the stairs down to the second level, one passes a giant chandelier made of drawings of Tintin characters; another surprise is a large round room with a mirrored floor and walls papered with the covers of Tintin books in seemingly every language. There is also a projection room, a restaurant, a boutique, workshops, offices, and a space for special exhibitions.

Hergé was such a masterful raconteur that it is easy to forget how highly regarded he was as an artist. He invented a drawing technique he called "*la ligne claire*"—the clear line—in which figures are drawn in segments, each of which is outlined in a firm dark border and filled in with a uniform color. The method was adopted by other cartoonists and intrigued modern artists. Photos of Balthus and Alberto Giacometti hang on the wall, along with quotations revealing how much they admired Hergé's work. Andy Warhol once claimed: "Hergé influenced my work as much as Disney... He had great political and satirical dimensions." For once Warhol was being sincere, and two of his portraits of the Belgian cartoonist hang in the museum as proof.

This page: A large reception area allows access to all four of the museum's main exhibition spaces.



Photos : © Hergé-Moulinsart 2009 (left); © Nicolas Borel, courtesy of Atelier Christian de Portzamparc 2009 (below)



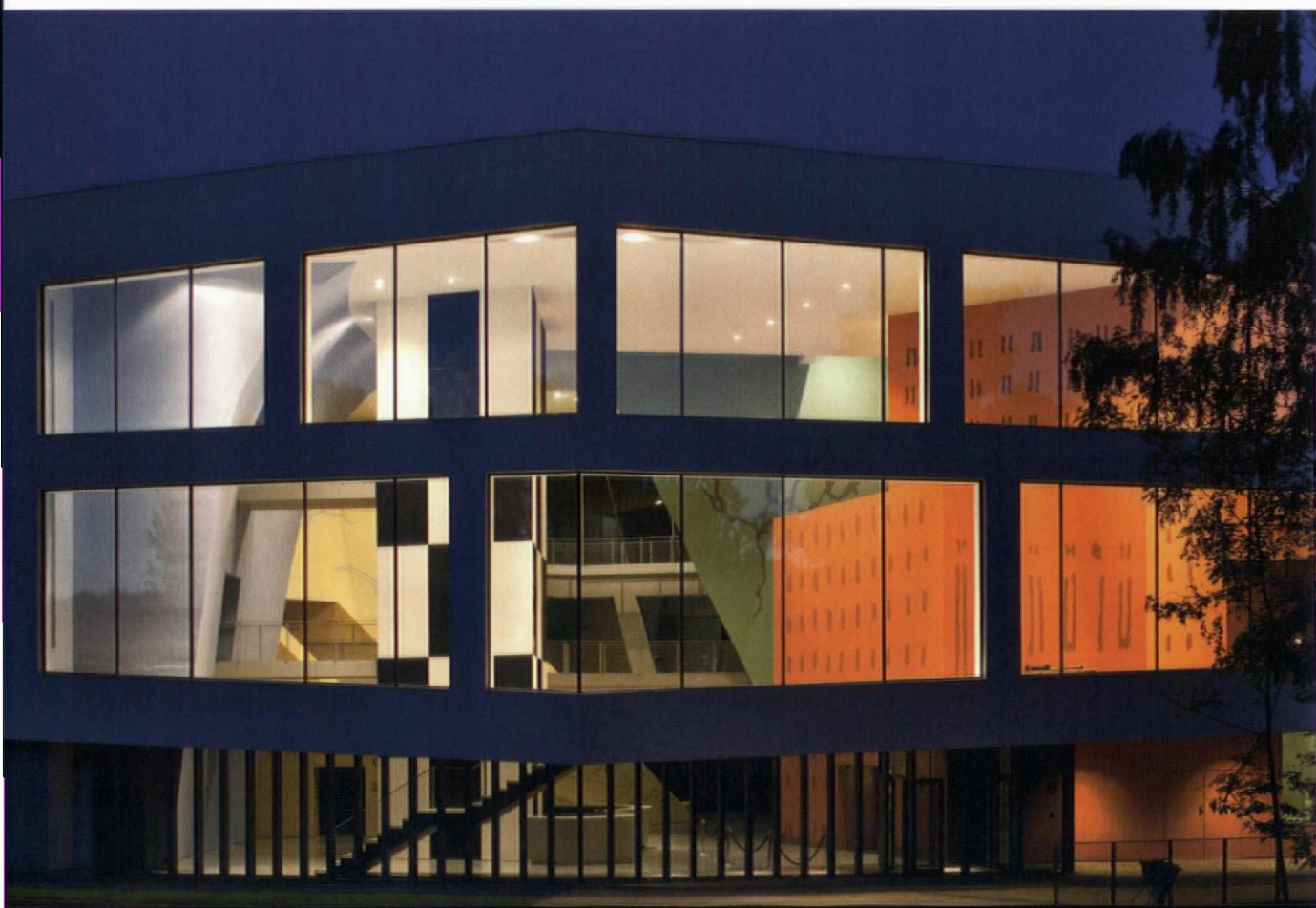
Left : Among the objects on display is a cutaway model of Tintin's rocket—from "Destination Moon - Explorers on the Moon"—built by Arthur Vannoeyen in 1951.

The museum has many examples of Hergé's graphic designs, such as posters that advertise winter sports destinations.

But Tintin is the star.

Below: A view of the Hergé Museum by night.

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BY BRENT LEWIS

For Eyes

The Alluring and Inscrutable Design and Art of
Thomas Stearns, Master of Glass and Fabric

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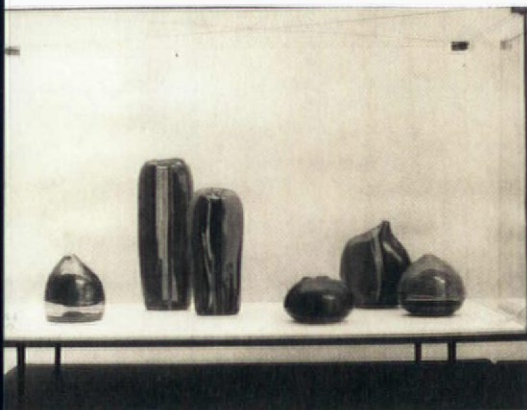
Photos: courtesy of the Estate of Thomas Stearns (top); courtesy of Christie's

A 24-year-old American graduate student embarked for Europe in 1960. The winner of a fellowship from the Italian government, he was voyaging across the Atlantic with the help of a Fulbright travel grant, and his destination was the island of Murano, in the Venetian lagoon. There he was to work as a guest artist-designer at the famed glassmaking firm Vetri Soffiati Muranesi Venini & Compagnia. The student had been enrolled at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, outside Detroit, and one problem was that he had received relatively scant training in glassworking. Another hurdle was that he spoke no Italian at all. Finally, he would be the first American to work in the clannish, closed world of the Venini glass furnaces.

Given these impediments, no one could have predicted that Thomas Stearns would, in the view of cognoscenti, become one of the most influential and important glass artist-designers of the mid-twentieth century. Nor would anyone expect that, despite all the plaudits he received for his efforts in glass, Stearns would switch media entirely, abandoning the ingenious skill set he demonstrated in Venice to explore fine art sculptural work in fiber. But Stearns was an enigmatic creative spirit, seemingly indifferent to the materials he used to try to attain a goal that perhaps only he could understand: to create works of art and design that, as he said, “stand apart, alone, and make sense simply by being something.”

Stearns was born in Oklahoma City in 1936. His first training came at the Memphis College of Art, where he studied painting. Transferring to Cranbrook, he focused on painting and weaving. He also took classes in music, poetry writing, and glasswork, and taught in the silk-screen department. By 1959, when Stearns learned he had a chance to go to Italy, he had completed his MFA exhibitions and thesis but was three credits shy of his degree: he hadn't fulfilled the geography requirement. Stearns, in essence, said the hell with it.

He arrived at Venini during an important transition in the firm's history. Paolo Venini, a Venetian lawyer who co-founded a glass firm in 1921 and would become a talented designer himself, had recently died. He left his company in the hands of his son-in-law, Ludovico de Santillana. Though construction-grade glass was the company's bread and butter, by the 1950s, under the guidance of architect Carlo Scarpa, Venini's creative director, the firm had come to the forefront of artistic glassmaking. Artists, architects, and designers such as Napoleone Martinuzzi, Gio Ponti, Tapio Wirkkala, and Fulvio Bianconi had all produced prize-winning, pride-inducing objects for the company. Stearns's experiments in fused glass at Cranbrook had given him a foot in the door at Venini, and he and de Santillana agreed that Stearns would continue in this direction. The American's mind-set changed



Opposite page, top: Thomas Stearns, right, with glassmaker “Checco” Ongaro, who produced Stearns’s designs, at the furnaces in the Venini factory in 1962.

Opposite page, center: The second component in Stearns’s three-piece *Sentinella di Venezia* (Sentinels of Venice) series, completed in 1962.

This page, top: The Venini company’s exhibition case, featuring works by Stearns, as shown at the XXXI Venice Biennale, held in 1962.

This page, above: A circa 1962 cylindrical Stearns vessel using the *inciso*—fused glass section—technique, as well as applied ribbon-like glass motifs.



Above: A circa 1961 Stearns *sasso*—or pebble-form—piece, capped with a layer of iridescent green-black glass.

quickly, though. His first few weeks on Murano in December of 1960 gave Stearns a new vision: that of sculptural, asymmetrical, and organic works influenced by the “mistakes” he had witnessed in the glass furnace rooms.

On the hellishly hot glass-blowing and -molding floors at Venini, Stearns was an outsider: an object of derision and the butt of jokes for the old guard glass masters, who realized Stearns had almost no knowledge of the processes and limitations of glassmaking. What’s more, his stylistic choices were, to veteran eyes, bizarre. “Stearns’s preference for unusual colors, such as black, orange, muddy greens, and grays, gave his designs a distinctively different look,” says Tina Oldknow, curator of modern glass at the Corning Museum of Glass. “His objects stood apart from other Venini productions. Ginette Venini, the widow of Paolo, said that Stearns seemed to prefer ‘*colori tristi*’—sad colors—to the usually bright and densely patterned hues of Venetian glass characteristic of the period.”

It would take a skilled and equally daring collaborator to shepherd Stearns’s ideas to reality. “Pieces such as Stearns’s *Doge’s Hat* were incredibly difficult to create technically,” says Audrey Friedman, co-owner of New York’s Primavera Gallery, which specializes in Venetian glass. “They required the fusing of layers of identically, yet irregularly shaped, ellipses of glass in different colors. There was no margin for error.”

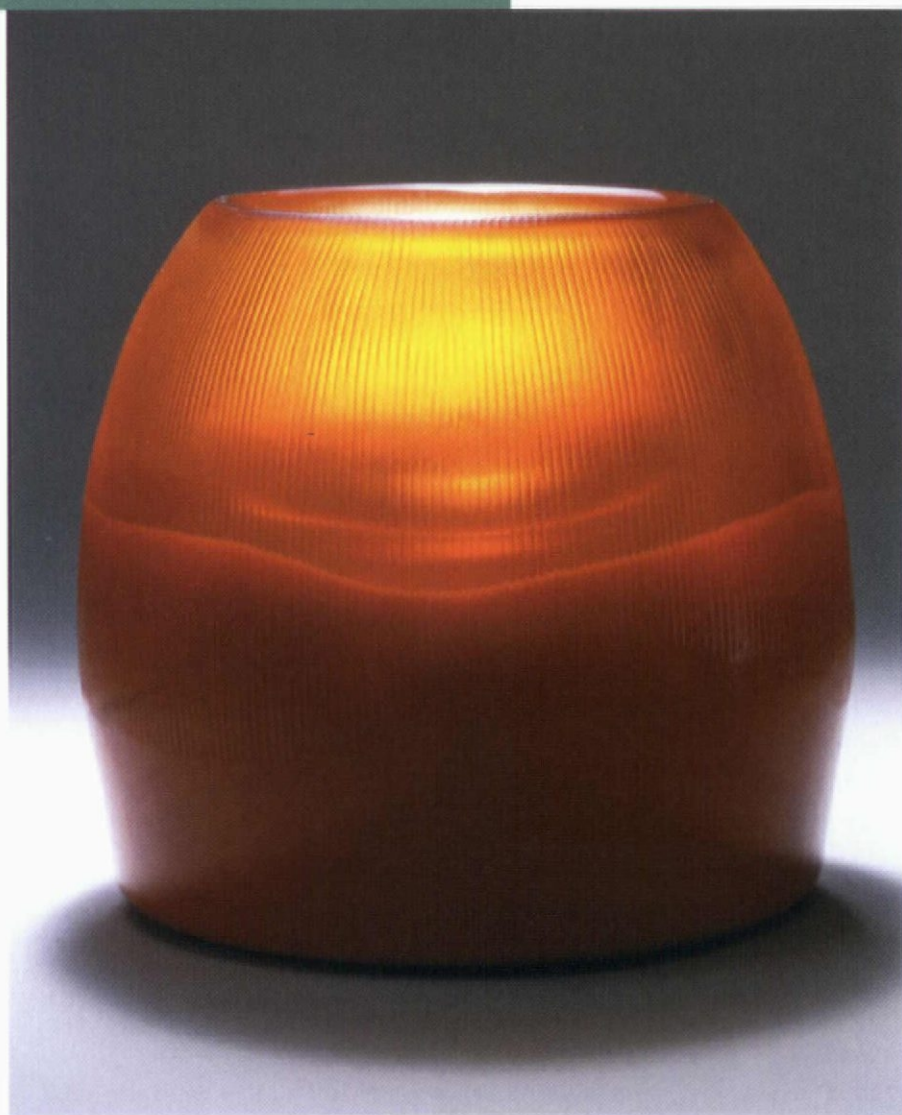
But an ally stepped up: a then-junior glassmaker named Francesco “Checco” Ongaro, who would go on to become one of the most highly respected glass masters of his time. Working together without a common language, and despite many a fiasco at the furnace, he and Stearns forged a strong working relationship. It is not hard to imagine that Ongaro’s support was a major reason Stearns declared that whatever work he made on Murano “would be a tribute to the magic and mystery of Venice.”

In 1962, Stearns produced his two most significant series of glass pieces. One was the effusively colored, three-piece *Sentinels of Venice* ensemble, which he called an emblem of his “fascination, wonderment, chagrin, piety, and empathy for my beloved acquired home, Venice.”

The tapered, slightly askew sculptures that make up the series each stand around twenty inches high, and are composed of fused, incised, and free-blown glass, with hand-set inlays and coatings of vitreous enamel. (The largest piece in the series achieved the record auction price for his work, selling in 2001 for just over \$100,000.) The second series was the somber *Facades of Venice*—a trio of bulbous cylinders with abstracted figuration that represents the cityscape at night reflected by moonlight in the waters of the lagoon. Stearns’s love for Venice was returned—though the city’s love was capricious. His work won first prize for glassware in the 1962 Venice Biennale, but the award was rescinded when the judges learned that Stearns was an American.

"In a world of inhumanities and turbulence, it is good to have objects through which to relate a "no-threat"—it is necessary for the spirit".

—Thomas Stearns



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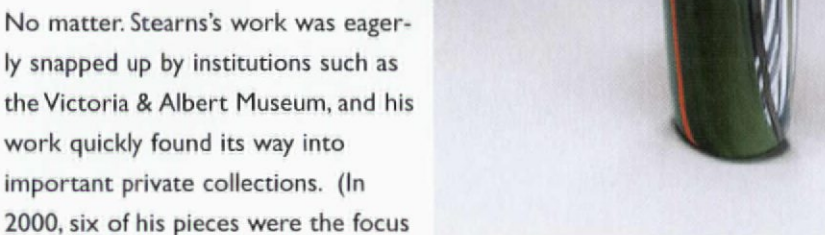
Above: *Night Image #6*, a Stearns fiber assemblage on a steel-and-wood base, completed circa 1967.

Left: A Stearns *Sunset* vessel, circa 1961, incorporating two pieces of fused and etched glass.



Above: Stearns's fiber assemblage *Night Image #1*, made circa 1966.

Far right and near right: Two views of a Stearns imploding vessel, part of the 1962 *Facciate di Venezia* (Façades of Venice) series.



No matter. Stearns's work was eagerly snapped up by institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, and his work quickly found its way into important private collections. (In 2000, six of his pieces were the focus of "Venetian Glass: 20th Century Italian Glass from the Olnick Spanu Collection," a signal exhibition of Venetian glass at New York's American Craft Museum, now the Museum of Arts and Design.

Rarity is one reason that Stearns's glass is a cynosure for collectors. Because of the technical complexity of his designs, Venini put only one of his schemes into production: an assortment of simple, cylindrical, four-section incalmo—or fused-section—wares, and even the least ambitious of these works fetch around \$7,000 at auction today. But it is his beguiling, wholly original aesthetic that accounts for his standing in the field of glass artistry. "Stearns's work, especially his *Facades of Venice* and the *Sentinels*, represented new directions for the glass vessel," Oldknow says. "He made sculptural pieces when the American Studio Glass movement was just beginning. He foreshadowed work by artists such as Dale Chihuly and Marvin Lipofsky."

Given the nearly instant acclaim Stearns earned via his glass pieces, it comes as something of a shock that, after he left Venice at the end of 1962, he never worked in glass again. While at Venini, Stearns tinkered at home in a different medium: fiber assemblage, which overtook his interest in glass. In 1964, he joined the roster of Willard Gallery in New York, which also represented Morris Graves, Mark Tobey, and David Smith. The next year he won a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. And in 1968, he was given a one-man show called "Constructions" at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida. (Showing at the museum at the same time was an exhibition of large felt collage banners created by fifteen artists, including Robert Indiana, Andy Warhol, Milton Avery, Larry Rivers, Helen Frankenthaler, and Roy Lichtenstein.)

An example of an asymmetrical form that Stearns called the *Doge's Hat*



Isamu Noguchi,
after spending some
time in Stearns's
studio, thanked
him and remarked,
"I feel
refreshed."

Seven of Stearns's fiber assemblages were displayed: *Night Image #1* through *Night Image #6*, along with a sculpture called *White Oracle*. In the pamphlet accompanying the show, Ringling curator Karl Nickel wrote that Stearns's view of the role of an artist was "to gather a calm about himself, and to create ... 'something tranquil that makes sense.'" Constructed of raw and dyed threads and overlays (including cactus fibers and a rare cotton textile from Guatemala), the assemblages have aesthetic parallels with his work in glass. Both have strange, organic, and asymmetrical forms that use layers, color, and texture to distance the viewer while simultaneously drawing him in. But they operate on a wholly different scale. The fiber works reach near eye level, and perhaps because of this, reactions to the sculptures varied widely. John Cage, after studying *Night Image #1*, said, "Oh, that is silence." Alfred Barr, the first director of the Museum of Modern Art, found the works "too sexual." Isamu Noguchi, after spending some time in Stearns's studio, thanked the artist and remarked, "I feel refreshed."

Fiber was a popular medium for craftsmen during the 1960s, but throughout his career Stearns insisted that his works, whether glass or fiber, were fine art. He was deliberate and cautious, if not controlling, of his work, even when sales were concerned. Stearns once tried to block a sale to Joseph Hirshhorn because he felt the noted collector did not accord his sculptures proper respect. Stearns was also fanatical about conservation. Attached to a base of linen-covered steel and wood, the fibers in his pieces were easily damaged and prone to fade. When the Philadelphia Museum of Art acquired *Night Image #1* in 1992, he wrote a long letter detailing the precise procedure by which he wanted the sculpture unpacked and installed. Yet he had cause for concern. Stearns had already seen tragedy befall some of his most prized works. One of the three *Sentinels of Venice* was broken in shipping and now exists only as a fragment. In 1973, a fire at Venini destroyed the firm's museum and with it the six pieces Stearns had exhibited at the 1962 Biennale.

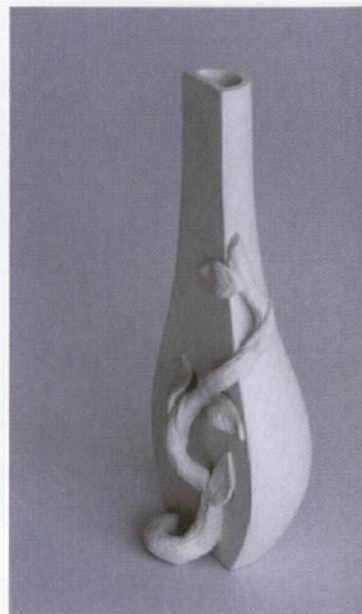
In 1970, Stearns began to teach full-time at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, instructing classes in fiber work, sculpture, and painting, and was known as a dynamic and personable teacher and mentor to his students. He retired in 2001, but continued to make drawings, pastels, and other works on paper until his death in May 2006. Toward the end of his life, Thomas Stearns lived in a loft not far from Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. At the top of a flight of stairs, guests were greeted by a work of art that Stearns had kept in his personal collection: the fiber assemblage *Night Image #6*. Standing there—haunting, yet strangely appealing—the work had, like its maker, found its meaning "by being something."

Brent Lewis is a furniture and design specialist at Christie's New York

How Wilhelm Kåge introduced artful and cosmopolitan design to Swedish ceramics

Fire and Ice

BY GREGORY CERIO

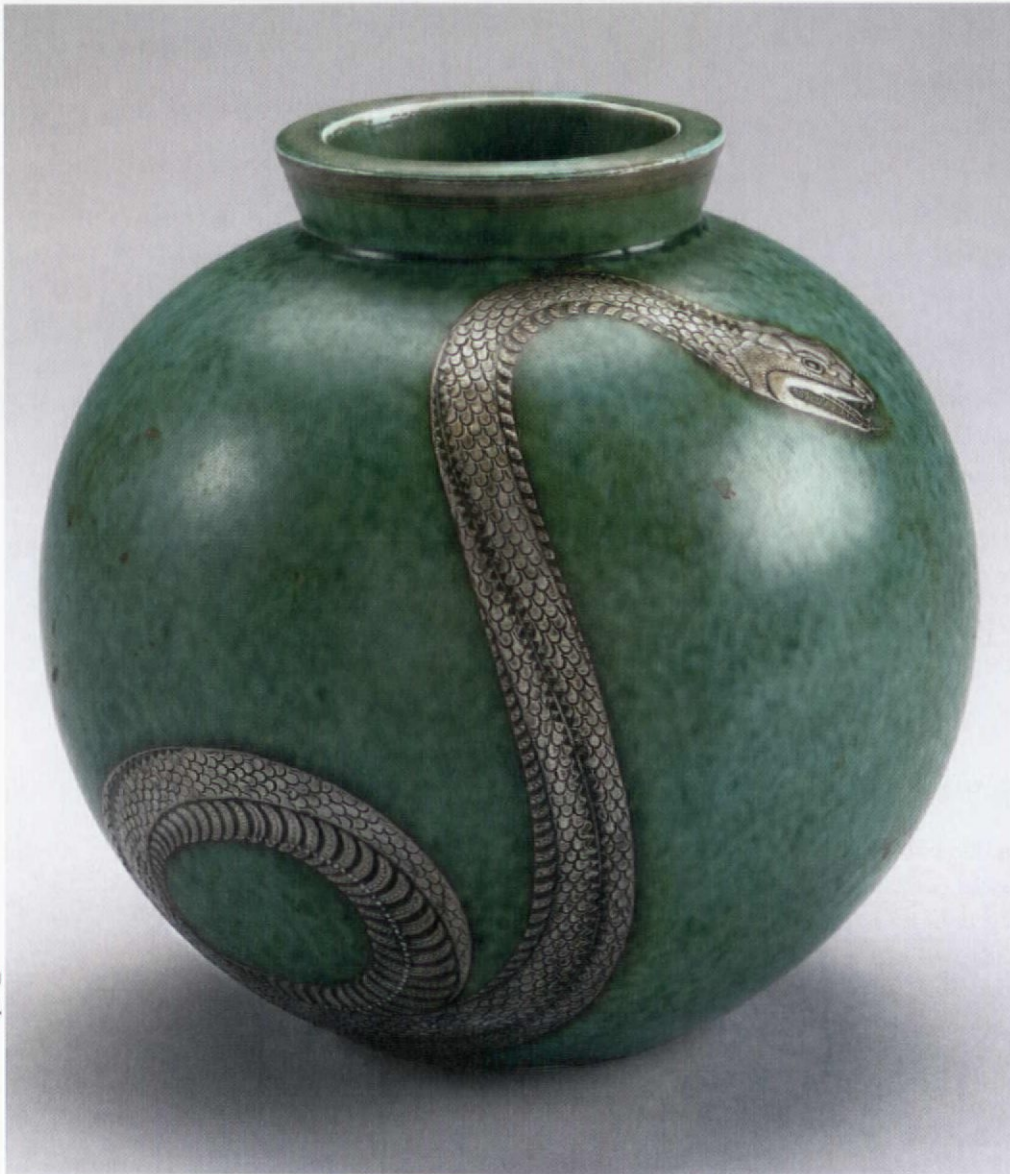


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Wilhelm
Kåge

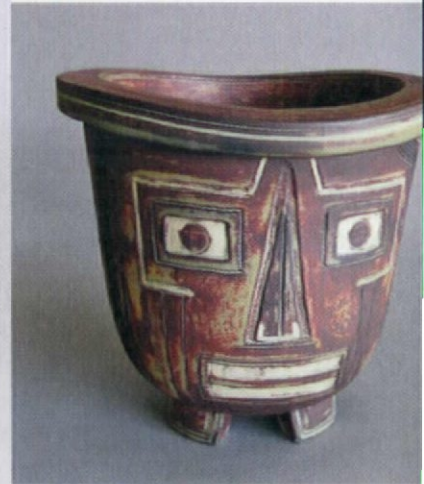
This page: "Surrea" stoneware vase designed by Wilhelm Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1940. Signed with stamp. **Opposite page:** "Surrea" stoneware vase by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1955. Artist inscribed signature with factory marks.





Left: "Argenta" ware vase by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1930. Embossed and chased silver decoration of a snake. Gustavsberg marks in silver.
Below, left: A pair of vases by Berndt Friberg for Gustavsberg, made 1955 (blue/grey) and 1958 (yellow). Incised signatures.
Below, right: "Farsta" ware bowl by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1955. Signed with stamp.

Photos: courtesy of Jacksons, Stockholm (top); courtesy of Mark McDonald (below, left and right)



Right: Stoneware vases by Stig Lindberg for Gustavsberg, circa 1950. Artist inscribed signatures with factory marks.



Left: "Farsta" ware fish vase by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1950. Carved and impressed decoration. Yellow, brown and blue green running glaze.

Shame is a powerful motivator.

In 1914, an exhibition of the decorative arts of the Baltic nations held in Malmö, Sweden, proved to be a critical disaster for the locals. Industrial ceramics makers came in for the worst mockery—their work was panned as insipid and stale. Gustavsberg, one of the country's largest porcelain makers, chose to be bold when they hired a new creative director in 1917. Rather than a seasoned ceramist, Gustavsberg took on a 28-year-old painter, Wilhelm Kåge, who had studied in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Munich—then a hotbed of avant-garde art. Kåge made his name with images for theater posters, testimony not only to his artistry, but also to his appreciation for the power of graphic design. What's more, he had a degree of sophistication uncommon among Swedes. "Kåge traveled widely, unlike most of his countrymen," says Kim Hostler, co-owner of Antik, a New York gallery that specializes in vintage Scandinavian design. "And he brought the world back home with him."

The relative isolation of Scandinavia contributed to the region's singular form of modernist design. In the early twentieth century, Nordic countries were far less industrialized than those of continental Europe. Scandinavians were tied to the land, and a tradition of handicraft was lively. What's more, as Eric Setliff wrote in the catalogue essay to an exhibition organized several years ago by dealer Mark McDonald, "Nordic modern design had little of the dogmatism of other design movements; artists were free to produce work that was extremely individualistic and expressive....Scandinavian modernism had more personality" than angular, metal Bauhaus work.

What Scandinavia lacked was a deep pool of inspiration from which to draw ideas. The work of Finland's Alvar Aalto and Denmark's Arne Jacobsen embodied an aesthetic vocabulary based on nature, but many designers were still inspired primarily by Norse folklore. Kåge came to Gustavsberg with a cosmopolitan view. He spent the bulk of his first dozen years at the company designing tableware—the bread and butter of a manufacturer that made everything from dinner plates to toilets. He used his off time to travel to museums in Britain, Italy, France, and Germany to study historical ceramics, filling scores of sketchbooks with drawings of pottery. At the same time, he took every opportunity to visit galleries to see the latest currents in art. Kåge returned to Sweden after each journey with a mind brimming with ideas.

In 1929, Kåge unveiled his first art pottery designs. While he was hugely prolific, his work can be divided into three key lines. His first success was "Argenta" stoneware—pieces that feature a mottled green glaze decorated with images painted in silver. Interestingly, the pottery forms and the motifs painted on them often bear no relation: Kåge would put a neoclassical device on an Asian-inspired vessel, or place a mermaid, or dragon, image on a quiet, spherical vase.

Right: "Argenta" ware lidded vessel by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1940. Artist inscribed signature with factory marks. The face of the muse-like figure is likely based on that of Kåge's wife, ballerina Jenny Hasselquist.



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While "Argenta" pieces were made through the '50s, Kåge's "Surrea" collection, which debuted in 1940, was relatively short lived. Though the name suggests a Surrealist influence, the works are more Cubist in nature. Kåge experimented with a kind of deconstruction: he took a relatively simple form and broke it down. Some vases are halved and re-assembled into V-shaped components, others are split and rejoined upside down, some consist of a halved, narrowed necked vase joined to a vine or floral form.

Yet Kåge's best work was encompassed in a collection that debuted in 1930, one that he called "Farsta," named for the bay lands where Gustavsberg obtained the clay for its ceramics. In his "Farsta" ware, Kåge gave his imagination free rein. The pieces encompass both folk motifs—faces, fish, and dragon forms—and wildly experimental pieces that were not "thrown" on a pottery wheel, but molded or sculpted by hand. "The 'Farsta' series was Kåge's greatest achievement in my opinion," says McDonald. "These were unique, organic, and slightly unfamiliar forms. It stands alone for its excellence in variety, style, and quality." Most "Farsta" is glazed in earthy brown/moss tones, and decorated with applied or incised designs. In the late '40s, Kåge began to attach some of his made-for-exhibition "Farsta" forms to plinth-like bases—unglazed coils, glazed columns, and spilt feet. Says Hostler: "It was as if he was declaring 'This is art.'"

Kåge was a fortunate artist-designer throughout his career. In the early '40s, Gustavsberg allowed him to create an art studio separate from the industrial concerns of the company. In the '30s, he was aided by the arrival of a pair of designers who would go on to become two of the most celebrated creators of Scandinavian ceramics. One was Berndt Friberg, a master potter and glaze-maker who was a proponent of the simplicity of Japanese ceramics. The other was Stig Lindberg. Trained, as Kåge was, in painting, Lindberg was also a design-concept sponge—if not as scholarly as Kåge. Lindberg took over as Gustavsberg's creative director in 1949. Kåge continued to design for the company until his death in 1960. Both Friberg's and Lindberg's reputations took flight when Scandinavian design became the last word in modernist chic in the postwar years. Their work consistently outsells Kåge's to this day. But it was Kåge who showed the way to a new aesthetic vision.

—with additional reporting by Danielle Devine



Top, Left: "Surrea" stoneware vase by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1940. Signed "Gustavsberg Kåge." **Above:** A trio of spectacular "Farsta" ware vases by Kåge for Gustavsberg, circa 1950. Artist inscribed signature with factory marks.

Fairs, Exhibitions and Events

September

What Was Good Design?

MoMA's Message 1944-56

MoMA, New York, NY

September through November 30, 2009

www.moma.org

Selections from MoMA's design collection that illuminate the primary values of Good Design as promoted (and disputed) by museums, design councils, and department stores.

Bauhaus

Galerie Ulrich Fiedler, Berlin-Mitte

Reception September 25, 6pm

September-October, 2009

www.ulrichfiedler.com

The Harder They Fall/09

Moss, New York, NY

From September 14, 2009

www.mossoonline.com

An early fall offering of new work including pieces by Maarten Baas, Andy Coolquitt, G-Star Raw clothing by Marc Newson, Jay Kaplan, Ross Lovegrove for Yamagiwa, Peter Marigold, and Tittot.

Sergio Rodrigues

Espasso, New York, NY

September 15, 2009

www.espasso.com

Espasso will hold a book signing to celebrate the launch of a collection of the Brazilian designer's lamps and the "Chifruda" armchair.

"Retratos" Luis González Palma

Throckmorton Fine Art, New York, NY

September 17-October 24, 2009

www.throckmorton-nyc.com

An exhibition of recent work by the acclaimed Guatemalan photographer, Luis González Palma, well-known for his stark portraits of men, women, and children.

Du Verre à la Lumière – Max Ingrand

Galerie Jacques Lacoste, Paris

September 18-October 24, 2009

lacoste.jacques@wanadoo.fr

SF 20 San Francisco 20th Century

Modernism Show and Sale

San Francisco, CA

September 25-27, 2009

Preview gala September 24 benefiting

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

www.sf20.net

The second annual San Francisco 20th Century Modernism Show & Sale (SF20) features 45 exhibitors presenting decorative and fine arts from all design movements of the 20th century.

Liz O'Brien

New York, NY

www.lizobrien.com

Liz O'Brien opens in her new space at

306 East 61st Street in New York at the end

of September.

October

ReGENERATION Modern Furniture

New York, NY

October 1, 2009-January 15, 2010

www.regenerationfurniture.com

Contemporary paintings by Jody Morlock, Nancy Olivier, and Paul Sunday.

The Merchandise Mart International Antiques Fair

The Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL

October 2-5, 2009

www.merchandisemartantiques.com

Offering experienced and novice collectors a compelling roster of special events and an engaging lecture series, the fair showcases more than 100 international dealers and a wide range of Antiques genres and styles.

The Modern Show

New York, NY

October 16-18, 2009

www.stellashows.com

Featuring Art Deco, Mid-century Modern, Art Nouveau, Arts & Crafts, Scandinavian, French and Italian furniture, paintings, designer jewelry, lighting, rugs, books, photography, ceramics, glass, posters, silver and more.

FIAC

Paris

October 22-25, 2009

www.fiac.com

International Modern and Contemporary art fair with 180 galleries featuring more than 3,500 artists.

November

Timeless Constantin Boym

Wright, Chicago, IL

November 3-14, 2009

www.wright20.com

Wright introduces Timeless, an exhibition of unique works by Constantin and Laurene Boym, the 2009 winners of the National Design Award in product design.

Christophe Côme

Cristina Grajales, New York, NY

November 5-December 24, 2009

www.cristinagrajalesinc.com

A French designer, based in Paris and originally a sculptor, Christophe Côme's work has evolved into functional objects.

IFPDA Print Fair 09

New York, NY

November 5-8, 2009

www.printfair.com

Some 84 leading art dealers with specialties ranging from Old Masters to contemporary art, exhibiting etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs. Presented by the International Fine Print Dealers Association.

Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity

MoMA, New York, NY

November 8, 2009-January 25, 2010

www.moma.org

Shut down by the Nazis in 1933, this famous and influential school brought together artists, architects, and designers. The exhibition gathers over four hundred works, many of which have never before been exhibited in the United States.

The Russel Wright Award 10th Anniversary Museum of the City of New York, NY

November 11, 2009

www.russelwrightcenter.org

A cocktail buffet and auction on the second day of festivities for the exhibition Eero Saarinen: Shaping the future.

Art 20

New York, NY

November 13-16, 2009

www.sanfordsmith.com

The 8th edition of a show featuring fine art, painting, sculpture, photography from 1900 to the present.

Modernism

New York, NY

November 13-16, 2009

www.sanfordsmith.com

The 24th annual show, features style and design from 1890 to 2009, including furniture, decorative arts, glass, lighting, jewelry, and metalware.

Limited Edition Experiences

Miami Design District

Opening November 30, 2009

www.miamidesigndistrict.net

A collection of curated retail environments featuring exemplary fashion and accessory designers from around the world who will be offering limited edition merchandise.

December

Design Miami

Miami, FL

December 1-5, 2009

www.designmiami.com

Design Miami brings together dealers, collectors, designers, curators and critics from around the world in celebration of design culture and commerce.

Miami Modernism Show and Sale

Miami, FL

December 5-6, 2009

www.miamimodernism.net

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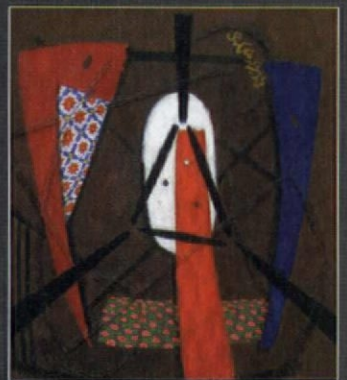
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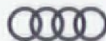
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Forrest "Frosty" Myers discusses ideas that inform his artwork, including his famed wire sculptures that serve as furniture.

Lines of Force

Current Thinking



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"This will tell you something: I collect vandalized mailboxes. Out in the country, kids will get hold of a baseball bat and drive down the road, whacking the boxes off their posts, denting the hell out of them. I think these mailboxes are beautiful. Not that I condone what the kids do, but I find it wonderful how one simple act changes everything. Most of my work is about transformation.

"About twenty-five years ago, when my wife and I moved to Brooklyn, none of the furniture we saw was up to the standards of what we wanted to live with. We spent seven months looking for a couch—it got neurotic. So I made my own. I put the couch in an exhibition, just for fun. And it sold.

"So I made more. It's hard to make a chair at all, to get the form right. It's even harder to make a chair that is a work of art. Other artists told me I couldn't do what I was doing—that the utilitarian aspect got in the way of pure art. But that's not the way I saw it. By constructing pieces out of bent and twisted wire, to my mind, I was pulling order out of chaos.

"I use wire because you can draw with it. A wire is a line in space. My pieces may look like they're put together randomly, but they're not. There's a purpose to every line. The chairs are really drawings.

"A lot of my pieces are so abstract that they don't even look like chairs until someone sits in them. That's a moment I like: when the abstract becomes something figurative. Taking a seat in one of my chairs becomes a kind of event—it's an act of transformation."

Forrest Myers is represented by the Friedman Benda Gallery, New York City.

Above: Myers's "The Pink Chair," 1994, is made of powder-coated aluminum wire.

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