

## In the Mix: Dealer, Decorator, Designer



EVAN LOBEL HAS OWNED A GALLERY FOR FIFTEEN YEARS and sells some of the most venerable names in design. But in 2011, he became a designer in his own right when he released a collection of furniture called **Night Star**. His clean-lined commodes, tables, and upholstered pieces not only speak to Hollywood Regency style, but also explore the interaction of light and dark by juxtaposing materials. Radiant patterns pepper the collection, emblazoning the doors of a commode in hand-cut ebony, or the surface of a writing desk in pale, lacquered goatskin.

Lobel has a knack for wrestling unwieldy materials into complex arrangements of pattern—take for instance his resin console inset with lacquered slices of bamboo—so it's not surprising that he cites designers like Edward Wormley, Ward Bennett, and Karl Springer (whose works he has sold for years) as pivotal inspirations. It follows that every detail is executed by hand, including the exquisite tufting on a series of sofas and chairs mounted on carved mahogany pedestals. "It's all about wonderful materials," Lobel says. "And, of course, the best craftsmanship possible." [lobelmodern.com](http://lobelmodern.com)

—Damaris Colhoun

Evan Lobel's designs include (clockwise from top left) his Night Star commode, Nautilus coffee table, Bond Street sofa, and Snow Leopard bedside tables.



MICHAEL BOYD DEBUTED HIS NEW COLLECTION, PLANEfurniture, at Los Angeles's **Edward Cella Art and Architecture** in April. Not surprisingly, planes and other geometries are central to the collection's minimalistic, case-study feel. So are warm, sustainable materials (jute rope and plywood), striking primary colors (red), and "affordable" price points, all of which place the collection squarely in the wake of pioneering modernists such as Jean Prouvé, Donald Judd, and Gerrit Rietveld. Organized into four series named as sparsely as the designs themselves—BLOCKseries, WEDGEseries, PLANKseries, and RODseries—the collection is at once pretentious and utilitarian, as comfortable in a gallery as it is on your patio. [boyddesign.com](http://boyddesign.com).

—Damaris Colhoun



decorators who wouldn't blink at pairing a low Turkish ottoman with a French moderne chair. It's also a case of revisionist history, inspired in part by George Balanchine, who is quoted on a page of the collection's flipbook. "There are no new steps, only new combinations," the late choreographer declared. Still, even a series of fabric-wrapped tables, finished to gleam like malachite, lapis, or onyx, puts a positive spin on 1970s style. [lizobrien.com](http://lizobrien.com).

—Damaris Colhoun

PLANEfurniture, Michael Boyd's new line, includes this armchair from the PLANKseries.

Liz O'Brien's Pamela sofa from her Editions collection.

Dresser from Paul Loebach's Great Camp collection.

IN EDITIONS, HER FIRST COLLECTION OF FURNITURE, LIZ O'BRIEN takes a stroll through decorative history, tweaking lines and techniques as she goes. Her Frances dining chair embodies Queen Anne style with sass, showing off cabriole legs and a plucky feminine shape. And her **Pamela sofa** celebrates the baroque (minus the kitsch) with tactile, scalloped lines. In many ways, Editions is an ode to eclecticism, aimed at

RUSTIC FURNITURE USUALLY VEERS BETWEEN CAMPY (think too much bark) and preppy (Adirondack chairs). But a new collection by **Paul Loebach** for Matternade, called Great Camp, finds middle ground and breaks the mold. Inspired by the upstate New York vacation culture of the late nineteenth century, the collection includes a wicker-seated armchair, a credenza, a dresser, and a coatrack sculpted from twig-like pieces of bark-free ash. Carved details and smooth, faceted legs give the collection the appearance of being whittled by hand, but in fact, the elements are fashioned from computerized machining techniques developed specifically for this project, then joined together by hand. Loebach injects a playful shot of color, too (in homage, perhaps, to the autumnal pleasures of these northeastern mountains), offering the chair in yellow, red, or blue in limited editions. [matternade.com](http://matternade.com).

—Damaris Colhoun



# Art + Craft = Design

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL STARTED OUT AS A PAINTER AND DRAFTSMAN but when his wife decided to take a ceramics class he became intrigued by the idea of making objects instead of images. "Once I got started I just never stopped—all of my work is to some degree driven by a simple desire to possess something, to spend time with something, to look at something," he says.

This past spring the **Julie Saul Gallery** in New York exhibited Russell's *After the Golden Age*, a ceramic still life comprising multiple elements, including fruit bowls, birds, and obelisks, that is replete with historical references culled from days wandering through museums, taking in prints, paintings, and decorative objects of all sorts. Russell cast every mold himself and perfected the glaze to mimic stone.

He's also recently started to experiment with bronze for a commission he's completing for the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Arts for Transit program, which was launched in the 1980s to oversee the installation of permanent artworks in New York City subway stations. For the Ninth Avenue station in Brooklyn he designed cast-bronze ornamental gates and finials in the shape of magnified bee-covered honeycombs and flowers, a motif carried over from earlier work in ceramics. The gates (scheduled to be installed this June) were assembled in Queens at the Modern Art Foundry, a family-operated bronze workshop using the lost wax casting technique, the same foundry where Louise Bourgeois's legendary spiders were created.

—Danielle Devine

THE DUTCH ARTIST HANS VAN BENTEM is best known for his crystal chandeliers. But don't call them rarified. Shaped into skulls, revolvers, and airplanes, his twinkling creations are more punk rock than formal decor. This summer, at the **Gemeentemuseum** in The Hague, the artist gets another chance to pit



his iconoclastic sensibility against traditional design. In an exhibition titled *Keep on Dreaming*, open June 1 through November 11, the artist will erect six installations inside the museum's most celebrated period rooms, which have remained unchanged since they first opened in 1935. Expect everything from crystal canopy beds to fantastical porcelain robots to creepy, clownish sculptures produced in collaboration with Senegalese artists. And all of it framed by opulent moldings, scenic wallpapers, and Japanese lacquer that speak to a bygone era of Dutch design. [gemeentemuseum.nl](http://gemeentemuseum.nl).

—Damaris Colhoun

**Christopher Russell's cast-bronze honeycomb and bees, part of his ornament for the Ninth Avenue subway station in Brooklyn.**

**Hans van Bentem's installations run the gamut from whimsical to provocative.**



## Fairs: There and Here

THE TWO-CONTINENT, TWO-SEASON DESIGN MIAMI OPENS ITS BASEL EDITION ON JUNE 12, and a key focus of the Swiss show is the annual selection of the Designers of the Future, an awards program now underwritten by W Hotels. The winning designers are often just at the beginning of careers that—if the past is any indicator—are likely to blossom quickly. (Meaning: watch this space.) This year's winners are an Englishman, a German, and a Canadian. **Tom Foulsham** established his own studio in London after working for both Thomas Heatherwick and Ron Arad. **Markus Kayser** founded his own design studio in London and Germany shortly after receiving a masters degree in art and design from London's Royal College of Art in 2011. **Philippe Malouin** left Montreal to work in England for Tom Dixon and ultimately opened his own London-based practice.

—Beth Dunlop

Designers of the Future winners (left to right) Tom Foulsham, Markus Kayser, and Philippe Malouin.

Carwan Gallery's console made by Misher' Traxler in collaboration with Roger Thome.

DESIGN DAYS DUBAI, THE FIRST-EVER SUCH SHOW IN THE MIDDLE EAST, drew twenty-two galleries to the largely unfamiliar turf (at least in the worlds of contemporary and collectible design) of the United Arab Emirates. The show, held in a tent in the shadow of the Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest tower), attracted galleries from around the globe, of which only one (R 20th Century) came from the United States. With participants from Africa, South America, Europe, and Asia, the cultural mix was a rich one. The fair's goals, said director Cyril Zammit, were to offer work by both established and emerging designers, opportunities for collaboration, and a platform to showcase work emanating from the Middle East. One scene-stealer came from Beirut's Carwan Gallery, where the Viennese designers Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler (who work together as **Mischer' Traxler**) collaborated on-site with Beirut craftsman **Roger Thome** to create a console table from 650 pieces of wood. Plans are already under way for the 2013 encore.

—Beth Dunlop

DOLPHIN PROMOTIONS AND 1STDIBS.COM launched the first of ten new objects and furnishings fairs, scheduled to open in cities across the country, right here in New York. On April 12 through 15, NYC20 drew thirty-six blue-chip dealers to a tent in Lincoln Center. Under a taut white ceiling a crowd of young

collectors wandered through a maze of booths styled as retro-era vignettes. There were plenty of standouts. **Paul Donzella** showed a bronze console by Philip and Kevin Laverne that resembled a hunk of driftwood freshly hauled from the sea. And **Downtown** presented a host of works by seminal Mexican designers, including Arturo Pani's feather-shaped fiberglass lounge chairs. But few things defined the atmosphere more vividly than the pop art minidresses at **Katy Kane Vintage and Couture Clothing**, projecting, like colorful talismans, the idea that our appetite for modernism is as robust as ever. The next stop on the tour was in Los Angeles, where the LA Modernism Show and Sale was open May 4 through May 6. Next up is San Francisco, September 13 to 16.

—Damaris Colhoun



COURTESY DESIGN MIAMI CARWAN GALLERY

## Sitting it Out



READING THROUGH TURRINI BY'S WEBSITE is like reading through a checklist of everything contemporary furniture should be—from a marketer's perspective anyway. Designed in collaboration with "talented designers," their "environmentally-friendly products" make them a "leader in the implementation of an Eco-Design approach." So imagine our delight when we found ourselves genuinely liking some of Turini BY's designs. Collaboration with French architect **Erwan Péron** yielded two intriguing concepts. For the first, the Kristal table, Péron trisected an oak-veneered block with three planes of clear PMMA so that it floats above the ground. For the second, he interlocked two tapering horizontal planes—one of oak, the other of the composite Dacquacryl—to form the Alliance sideboard. Our favorite, though, is the Bee collection by the French design agency **Fritsch-Durisotti**. From the side, the graceful lines of the pieces—seating and tables—open like pods, revealing the internal honeycomb structure. [turriniby.com](http://turriniby.com).

—Damaris Colhoun

MILAN'S FAMED SALONE INTERNAZIONALE DEL MOBILE, staged every April, is the premier event for design lovers everywhere and it always offers a surfeit of riches—from the fairgrounds itself to all the events and openings that take place throughout the city. For those looking for outdoor furniture, there was an embarrassment of riches this year, with almost every major manufacturer offering new collections. And for discerning collectors, there was also an alluring selection from outside the mainstream.

It's no longer news when fashion houses take on homewares. But this year **Marni** opted for a more original approach. Its exhibition included a collection of one hundred chairs made in Colombia by ex-prisoners—a project undertaken to help these people re-enter the community. The chairs, made of metal and multicolor PVC cords, are of a type common throughout Colombia, but Marni created new color variations and patterns, so each one is unique. The presentation will tour Marni stores around the globe and funds raised by their sale will go to a Milan charity for children of imprisoned mothers.

**Fritsch-Durisotti's**  
Bee lounge for  
TurriniBY.

**Nika Zupanc's**  
pendant lights  
for Vistosi.

**William Sawaya's**  
polyurethane  
Fei Fei chair.

**Marni's array of**  
chairs made by  
ex-prisoners.



YOUNG SLOVENIAN DESIGNER NIKA ZUPANC, whose work is already bought by collectors (her pieces are listed on [artnet.com](http://artnet.com)) presented her idiosyncratic take on outdoor furniture with her Summertime collection at **Spazio Rossana Orlandi**, Milan's fabled emporium of design. The lines of the pieces are simple, but her vision is far from ordinary since black is not usually a warm weather color choice. Tables and chairs have metallic pink frames. Chairs are upholstered in an outdoor fabric with a sharkskin-like finish, adorned with an embroidered anchor. The table has a toy-like winding mechanism that allows the top to flip up or over—one side is a mirror, the other a blackboard. The poetically pink Venetian glass pendant lights, made in collaboration with **Vistosi**, the Murano glassmaker, provide a softening allure.

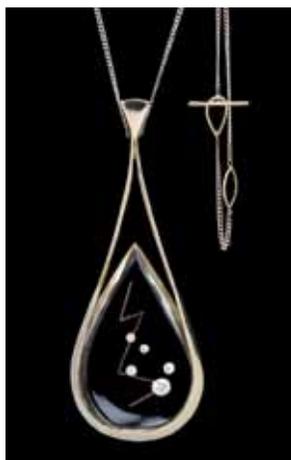
—Arlene Hirst



"Modern is what deserves to become an antique," Dino Gavina, one of the pioneers of Italian design, once claimed. And that status is what **Sawaya and Moroni** aimed for with Fei Fei, a high-density polyurethane chair designed by William Sawaya and made from five different molds—an ultra sophisticated manufacturing process. "It comes out as just one piece," says Paolo Moroni, who explained that the chair has an interior steel structure to give it rigidity. On the first days of the fair, the Fei Fei attracted museum curators from Indianapolis and Montreal who purchased examples for their collections, betting on the chair's future antique status.



# Museum Walk: All That Glitters



**Alessandro Mendini's Proust's Armchair, executed in mosaic, on view at the new Fondazione Bisazza near Vicenza, Italy.**

**Silver Ware by Studio Job at the Fondazione Bisazza.**

**Pendant by Margaret De Patta, 1960.**

**Bamboozler clothes tree by Richard Neagle, c. 1953.**

MOSAICS HAVE A LONG AND VENERABLE HISTORY, dating back centuries before the Roman Empire. We have trekked to Venice, Istanbul, Ravenna, and Barcelona (among other places) to see mosaics of both distant and relatively recent history.

The new **Fondazione Bisazza** near Vicenza, Italy, will be the first museum and study center to celebrate mosaics in contemporary design, though its scope is much wider than mosaics alone. With the curator and writer Maria Cristina Didero as executive director and Bisazza's chief of design Alessandro Mendini on board, the focus will be on contemporary design in the broadest sense. The museum opens on June 8 with the exhibition *John Pawson: Plain Space* in the temporary galleries.

The permanent installation will be devoted to a remarkable body of work that Bisazza has assembled over the years by asking an array of designers—selected for their wide-ranging imaginations—to reimagine the application of mosaic tile. “We would

like to enrich the collection by working with designers from around the world so that they will start discovering that mosaic tile is not only very beautiful but very flexible,” says Rossella Bisazza, who is the foundation's vice president. Among the designers represented are Tord Boontje, Jaime Hayon, Alessandro Mendini, Fabio Novembre, Andrée Putman, Ettore Sottsass, Studio Job, Patricia Urquiola, and Marcel Wanders. [fondazionebisazza.it](http://fondazionebisazza.it)

—Beth Dunlop

MARGARET DE PATTÀ'S SCULPTURAL BAUBLES elevated the language of jewelry. Half a century later, *Space-Light-Structure*, the first major retrospective of the work of this groundbreaking figure in the studio jewelry movement, will be at MAD in New York (June 5 through September 23—after being shown at the Oakland Museum of California, which organized it jointly with MAD). Fifty pieces of jewelry, in addition to ceramics and flatware, speak to De Patta's bold, transformative style, like her fluid, space-bending pendants, which jettison conventional symmetries, and the way she illuminated stones from within using a technique she called “opticut.” But De Patta did more than coin a radical new aesthetic. Blending Bauhaus ideals and constructivist style, she crafted cuffs, brooches, and rings that express a modernist's vision. [madmuseum.org](http://madmuseum.org).

—Damaris Colhoun

*CENTURY OF THE CHILD: GROWING BY DESIGN, 1900–2000*, at the Museum of Modern Art from July 29 to November 5, will explore projects related to children that are often underrepresented in design history, such as school architecture, playgrounds, nurseries, games, toys, and furniture. The exhibition will showcase the work of famous and unsung modern designers alike, including **Richard Neagle** (1922–2006). When he designed the Bamboozler clothes tree, suburban homes were mostly filled with unremarkable furniture in pseudo-historical styles. During the 1950s American toymakers, architects, designers, and even art museums, promised to develop a child's creativity through specially designed objects, such as the Bamboozler, that reflected the belief of progressive educators and sociologists that learning could be synonymous with fun. [moma.org](http://moma.org).

—Adriana Kertzer

LEFT: ALBERTO FERRERO PHOTO S (2) RIGHT: JOHN BIGELOW-TAYLOR PHOTO BROOKLYN MUSEUM, ALFRED T. AND CAROLINE S. ZOEBISCH FUND