

STATE *of the* ART

SIX CONTEMPORARY DESIGNERS DEBUT DAZZLING NEW WORKS THAT DEEM THEMSELVES WORTHY OF AN EXHIBITION.

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ERICH GINDER
ERICH GINDER STUDIO

Musical note: Although I consider myself a designer, I tend to go about life as an artist, and I strongly feel that creativity sort of feeds itself. For example, I love music, and I like to think that somehow plays a role into my practices. **On process:** While my style and the things I find interesting are constantly evolving, the pieces I produce often come from a desire to solve an ordinary problem in an artistic and interesting way (like the resin coat racks I made fresh out of art school largely out of a need for organization). **Material wisdom:** A vast majority of my current creations use relatively simple materials. Lately, I have been working with linen, aluminum and wood. The luxury element here is related to something less tangible than gold or other precious materials and more about the time spent conceiving and crafting each piece. **Defining luxury:** For me, luxury means owning fewer things, but of better quality—items that utilize a handmade or bespoke process and enduring materials.



GALLERY GODS

THE PIECES: Labyrinth Tables and Hypnosis Screen

THE DESIGNER: Erich Ginder

FIND IT: erichginder.com

THE INSPIRATION: For Erich Ginder, a Seattleite who has been rocking the design scene with his eponymous studio since 2004, luxury is in the process. Using common materials such as striped cotton ticking and stock aluminum extrusions, Ginder challenges himself to push the boundaries of palette and construction, reimagining them into something clever and unexpected. With both the Labyrinth tables and the Hypnosis screen, Ginder's trademark attention to detail pays off and somehow makes the transition from simple to outstanding look easy. While surely not the case, the results are indeed easy on the eyes.



STILL LIFE

THE PIECE: Stacks Bench

THE DESIGNER: Leah Ring

FIND IT: anotherhuman.la

THE INSPIRATION: The exploration of fluidity versus confinement defines Leah Ring's Stacks bench, a conceptual design sparked by meditation stones piled in a layered, unfixed environment. Mindful of oft-challenging pint-sized urban dwellings, the Los Angeles-based designer, who debuted her brand, Another Human, earlier this year, created the piece to be deconstructed for different meditation poses and relaxed seating arrangements alike. Ring's choice of upholstery—a sumptuous, sheeny gray velvet—elevates those fleeting ruminative moments in both mind and design.



LEAH RING
ANOTHER HUMAN

An artistry of one's own: There's a geometry that's consistent in my pieces—I'm drawn to certain shapes and lines first and then I try to think about how materials can be used in interesting ways. I want to always evoke a sense of playfulness, and thus what inspires me is often totally random but feels like a little wink from the universe. **While working at an interior design firm in NYC...** I was exposed not only to the great works of historically important designers, but also to relevant names like Lindsey Adelman and Carpenters Workshop Gallery. This really opened my eyes to what was happening in American contemporary design and solidified my wanting to be a part of it. **On community:** I'm thrilled to now be a Los Angeles designer in a time that feels like the creative community here is bursting at the seams with talent. I feel strongly about and love fabricating locally. **On your radar:** New York-based design studio Chen Chen & Kai Williams and British designer Max Lamb, because they work with materials in surprising and ingenious ways, and musicians Connan Mockasin and Grimes, because they are unapologetically themselves and celebrate their own brands of weirdness. I think it brings a whole lot of joy to their art.



ARTS AND CRAFTS

THE PIECES: Found Collection Plates & Vases

THE DESIGNER: Anna Aristova

FIND IT: aspacestudio.com

THE INSPIRATION: Moved by the cosmos, Russian-born Anna Aristova chose black clay to emulate the wild mysteries of the galaxy and gold accents to represent the sparks of light and life within it for her Found collection. The universe is often the subject of poignant and stunning interpretation by the designer, who cofounded Brooklyn creative studio A Space with her partner, Roza Gazarian, three years ago. Like the gold flecks in her handcrafted pieces, Aristova's point of view is calming and curious all at once, and her Found works pack a big punch for being such tiny, delicate creations.



ANNA ARISTOVA
A SPACE

Universal appeal: My biggest intention is to bring nature's timeless beauty to our contemporary lifestyles. Each object I create is a one-of-a-kind formation that beckons to look beyond mere shape and material and to connect with the primordial nature of the elements. A constant awareness of an object's transience is what continually keeps me fascinated with creation in all its articulations. **Impermanence...** Has been the most consistent theme spanning my work thus far. Everything flows, changes, is created and disappears—day turns into night, rivers flow into oceans, seasons change into one another. **In the process of creation...** A similar transition happens. So many elements come together for a single piece to tangibly manifest. **Material wisdom:** Clay has been used for thousands of years and is raw and heavy, while gold is fascinating and mystical. I love using both—it's a constant balance of opposites.



DEFYING GRAVITY

THE PIECE: Unsettled Vessel Three

THE DESIGNER: Brian Thoreen

FIND IT: brianthoreen.com

THE INSPIRATION: All of the works from Los Angeles-based Brian Thoreen's Unsettled collection deal with forms and components that are unable to function without their corresponding counterbalance, which creates a spellbinding tension between the materials and structure. Here, Thoreen's choice to use glass to support a large cast-bronze base evokes a thrilling sense of precariousness and follows the multidisciplinary designer's belief that the inspiration is in the medium.



BRIAN THOREEN
STUDIO BRIAN THOREEN

An artistry of one's own: I grew up always building things and working with my hands. The more I learned, the more I was interested not just in making something physically, but creating conceptually. I worked in the art world as a studio assistant, installer and fabricator, but the further along I was in education, the more I grew interested in design and architecture. In a way, I think I gravitated there because of the functionality factor. **On luxury:** To me, it's less about extravagance and more about experiences and comfort. The best indulgences are the ones that set your heart on fire or give you pause and appreciation. **Hero worship:** People who have purpose and an honest vision—Donald Judd, John Waters, Peter Zumthor and my son, Nova. **My mission...** As far as art goes, is really as simple as creating a life's work that I am proud of; to look back at all of that and know it was done with intent. That, to me, is entirely satisfying.



FERNANDO MASTRANGELO
FERNANDO MASTRANGELO STUDIO

Material matters: I have a deep commitment to challenging what I consider to be beautiful, and mostly, I find it in nature. A black streak of volcanic ash embedded in a floating iceberg, for example, is nature's perfect abstract sculpture. It often pains me to think about how exquisite it is—a phenomena almost not worth trying to imitate. But, that's what I try to do with my designs. **I'm definitely interested...** In luxury; not in the high-brow-Plaza-Hotel kind, but more of the upstate-farmer/furniture-maker-genius type. I want things that don't exist yet. **To me, a statement piece...** Is a work of art disguised as design—something more capable of shifting one's perceptions, and less about function and utility. **Hero worship:** I surround myself with extraordinary minds. As far as revering one person goes, though, I think we take little bits from many people, and follow a weird, wavy path to our own sense of self.

ON HUE

THE PIECE: Escape Bench

THE DESIGNER: Fernando Mastrangelo

FIND IT: maisongerd.com

THE INSPIRATION: Using unassuming materials (salt, sand and sugar) and overflowing with seemingly boundless ideas and energy, New York's Fernando Mastrangelo has quickly and deservedly carved a name for himself in the contemporary art landscape. Each one of the designer and sculptor's creations is a love letter to Mother Nature, with the Escape bench serving as an homage to the sunset and the magical color of an evening sky.



FLORAL AFFAIR

THE PIECE: Flora Wall Hanging Light

THE DESIGNER: Marcin Rusak

FIND IT: marcinrusak.com

THE INSPIRATION: A century's worth of familial history in the floral industry and a peeked curiosity about the human race's obsession with flowers both came to a head when Marcin Rusak made a trip to the London flower market and witnessed the massive amount of discarded blooms laying around. The Polish designer began collecting and processing them, quickly realizing how often we use nature as inspiration but how rarely we actually use it as decoration. Encased in resin, the flowers in the Flora wall hanging light give greater meaning, and in some ways, a new life, to one of Earth's truest and most beautiful resources.



MARCIN RUSAK
MARCIN RUSAK STUDIO

Full bloom: My ideas have always turned toward the unknown territories of expression in form and processes while remaining mindful of ephemerality, value and consumption. A lot of my work is devoted to exploring those details and magnifying and presenting them in a different light. Flowers have always been perceived as luxurious yet temporary decoration that are often soon discarded once they satisfy our immediate aesthetic needs, and I am trying to change that perception. **My mission...** Is to stimulate questions about history and possible future scenarios by playing with the course of destruction, renewal and reconstruction. I am still contributing to material culture, but I hope to be making things that have enduring appeal, both aesthetically and conceptually. **On going with the flow:** I'm still trying to process life as it emerges in different aspects. I've always believed in trusting your intuition and the importance of surrounding yourself with people you admire.