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DESIGN WEEK
2018

Sight Unseen





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Sight Unseen Offsite

Sight Unseen (sightunseen.com) is an online magazine that uncovers what's new and next in design and the visual arts, with a focus on independent makers often working outside traditional disciplinary boundaries. It was founded in 2009 by editors and curators Jill Singer and Monica Khemsurov.

2018 marks the fifth edition of Sight Unseen OFFSITE, a curated design fair produced annually by Sight Unseen's founders. This year's show incorporates a primary hub space at 201 Mulberry Street — featuring group exhibitions as well as Sight Unseen-curated projects focused around the theme of collaboration — plus 12 partner venues around Manhattan, each of which is hosting a new collection, exhibition, or site-specific installation.

The participants — whose projects and installations are featured in the pages of this magazine — occupy a variety of increasingly intersecting disciplines, and represent the more holistic, inclusive attitude towards design that Sight Unseen has always championed. Use this magazine to find out more about the designers included in this year's show, and as a map to plan out your New York Design Week itinerary.

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SUOFFSITE

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3.1 Phillip Lim

BY DEBORAH SHAPIRO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE EWENS

The collaboration between Providence-based husband-and-wife designers Ben and Aja Blanc is an intentional back-and-forth, and what emerges from it is an enlivening tension in the objects and furniture they create – spare shapes and clean lines matched with an element of formal ease or material softness. Pieces that are smart and sophisticated, but not without warmth. “It’s really hard to have two people trying to design one thing. But it’s also the best part about it,” says Aja.

3.1 PHILLIP LIM

The Blancs met as grad students at RISD, and with Aja’s background in museum studies and Ben’s in furniture design, their combined practice benefits from a broad historical knowledge, critical eye, and fabrication expertise. They also share a consistency of vision, especially when it comes to the materials they work with. Their newest collection revolves strictly around rift white oak; curly, short-cut shearling; and mirror. “We’ve chosen these materials for very specific reasons that are in the details, in the grain, in the color and the texture,” says Aja.

For inspiration, they’re not afraid to look to certain giants of the art world, to consider the kinds of questions those big names were asking, and to then work out their own approach as an answer. Their Marfa Chair, for instance, is an overt nod to Donald Judd. To warm it up a bit, they rounded some edges and looked to the tactility of Méret Oppenheim’s fur-covered teacup and saucer. A shearling backrest adds a literal plushness, but it’s the unexpected placement of shearling inside the chair’s lower half that creates, in Ben’s words, “a cave-like cubby” and a sense of coziness, “like pulling a blanket up tight.”

It’s also easy to see parallels between the Blancs’ work and that of fashion designer Phillip Lim, in whose NoHo shop they’ve installed the full collection – the Marfa chair, a companion side table, layered “mirror collages” in peach and antique tones, and large-scale wood-turned vessels – during Sight Unseen OFFSITE. Both create beautiful works meant to live and function in the everyday world: “He’s dealing with wearable garments

and we’re dealing with usable objects,” says Ben. The latest 3.1 Phillip Lim line, says Aja, is also looking at layer-ing in an interesting way – asking how you merge minimalism with multiple textures and patterns – that will contrast with and complement the couple’s designs: “We love the idea of someone in a bright red outfit possibly sitting on our muted palette chair,” says Ben. “It’s about the dance that’s happening between those elements.”



Creatures of Comfort

BY SHOKO WANGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLÉMENT PASCAL

Like many successful matches made these days, designers Sophie Lou Jacobsen and Sarita Posada found each other online. “We met on Craigslist,” says Jacobsen, referencing a job listing Posada posted the same year Jacobsen moved from London to New York. Though the job didn’t work out, a lasting impression was made – the women became friends and occasional creative collaborators.

Now, for Sight Unseen OFFSITE, the duo are cementing their partnership with the launch of Studio Sayso, which unites Jacobsen’s product design practice with Posada’s expertise in interiors. The studio’s Collection 01, which is on view exclusively at Creatures of Comfort, features colorful tables, chairs, and lamps inspired in part by Jerico, a town outside of Posada’s hometown in Colombia where each house is painted a different vibrant hue. “The joy you feel walking through a town like that is a feeling we wanted to translate into this collection,” Jacobsen says. (Other influences include 1930s French and 1970s Italian design.)

Conceived in New York and brought to life by Colombian fabricators, the studio’s debut pieces are representative of Posada and Jacobsen’s shared design interests. “Looking back at designers we admire and some of our



favorite pieces from the beginning of the last century, this was furniture designed to be used, to be accessible,” Posada says. She cites both Alvar Aalto and Mathieu Matégot as examples, for thoughtfully elevating an industrial material (Matégot with steel), and for a commitment to merging beauty and affordability (a key component of Aalto’s work).

In their own collection, the pair were able to create pieces that can be used in a variety of settings by marrying powder-coated steel frames with lacquered wood surfaces or upholstery that can be swapped out depending on the client or season. The collection’s simple forms make production adaptable and sustainable in the long run, they say, “so we imagine continuing to push this collection rather than constantly designing something from scratch.”

Retrosuperfuture



BY BRIDGET MORIARITY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT KROENIG

Recycled rubber is Arielle Assouline-Lichten's muse. "It's so high-performance and so durable, but it's also super tactile, has this very distinct texture, and is pretty pleasing to the eye," she explains. Since 2016, she's been using the industrial material in inventive ways and at varying scales as Slash Objects, the product-focused offshoot of her multidisciplinary design practice, Slash Projects. Mingled with other materials like concrete, marble, brass, and ceramic, recycled rubber takes on the domesticated feel of terrazzo in everything from side tables to vanity trays.

When charged with a takeover of the downtown eyewear outpost Retrosuperfuture for Sight Unseen OFFSITE, Assouline-Lichten unsurprisingly called on the stone-like properties of her favorite material, sprinkling fragments of shredded tires throughout the store like pebbles. At the shop's entrance, a cluster of plants in rubber planters gives way to a vitrine housing a collection of small mirrors and tableware among the frames on display. A trail of rubber rocks then leads the curious to the back of the store, where a trio of new pieces is on display: a mirror featuring a black marble base and a black steel frame, a collection of black rubber and concrete side tables, and a standing light sculpture.

For all of its power, though, rubber is merely one inspiration point for the temporary installation. Having studied architecture in Tokyo under Toyo Ito, Assouline-Lichten also looked to Japan for cues. During her time abroad, she became transfixed by the famous Ryoan-ji garden in Kyoto:

"Every part is manicured in a very precise way that lends itself to a visitor becoming a bit more self-reflective," she says. "I try to channel that in my work."



Assembly New York



BY LAURA MAY TODD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ENDER SUENNI

Design firm Llot Llov was founded in the most Berlin of Berlin ways possible: in the back seat of a taxi shuttling between nightclubs. Jacob Brinck had just thrown a party to raise funds to start a design studio, and in the cab – sandwiched between friends in the early morning hours – he explained to Anya Bauer his grand scheme. She immediately jumped on board, and they’ve been working together ever since.

That was twelve years ago. Since then, the studio has made a name for itself with furniture and interiors that beautifully fuse craft – knitting, macramé, natural dyeing processes – and design. This week, for Sight Unseen OFFSITE, they’re debuting two new projects at Assembly New York on the Lower East Side: A fringed pendant lamp called Fran, and the latest addition to their ongoing Osis line, a range of colorful, customizable side tables.

The lamp, made from floating tiers of streaming rayon, is one part cheerleader’s pom-pom, one part party-ready piñata. Composed of strips of fabric attached to a series of wire rings, Fran rustles and shakes in the breeze, but aesthetics weren’t the only thing on Llot Llov’s mind when devising it. “We needed to create something simple enough for the production we wanted to use,” explains Brinck. To produce the lamp, they worked with Mammu, a Latvian-based social enterprise that recruits stay-at-home mothers – who otherwise wouldn’t have access to income – to craft projects from home. The tables, too, have their roots in craft. Now in its fifth edition, their Osis



LLOT LLOV

series revolves around a blurry, kaleidoscopic surface pattern achieved by scattering sea or stone salts onto the painted surface of birch wood boards. As it dries, the salt soaks up some of the liquid in the paint, leaving a rich gradient behind.

With their blocky, geometric bases and removable tops, the tables are designed to be mixed and matched; each base can fit with each top or be flipped over entirely for use as a planter. But the surface

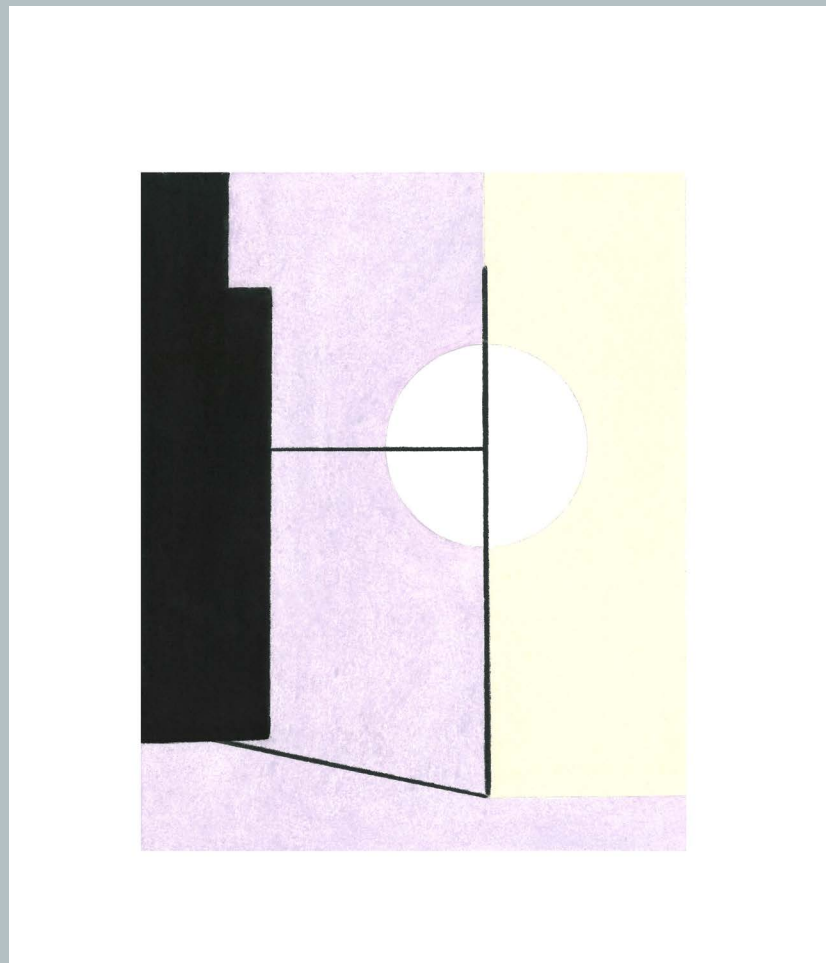
treatment is the star here, with colorways – swirling shades of red and orange, deep teal, pinks and blues – designed to fit logically alongside Llot Llov's previous work. "With this collection, we really wanted to show what's possible with this technique," explains Brinck of the salt-dyed material. "We wanted to show how interesting it looks in different color combinations, and on a six-sided table with sharp edges, it comes out almost psychedelic."



ASSEMBLY NEW YORK



Samuji



BY MONICA KHEMSUROV
ILLUSTRATION BY KARMEN WHINFREY

The last time Jamie Iacoli teamed up with glass artist John Hogan, in 2014, it was for a series of lamps and tables released under the banner of Iacoli & McAllister, the Seattle-based furniture company she was running at the time with fellow designer Brian McAllister. Iacoli's second collaboration with Hogan – three large tabletop sculptures on view this week at the Finnish fashion brand Samuji's Soho flagship – features a similar metal-meets-glass construction, yet nearly everything else has changed. Two years after McAllister departed to pursue his own work, the project serves as Iacoli's official declaration of independence, having revised the company name to match her own and upended the nature of its business model.

Whereas Iacoli & McAllister once focused on the high-volume self-production of streamlined tables and lighting, the new eponymous brand will pull back a bit commercially to grant Iacoli more creative freedom. She'll still offer the same core collection, but in tandem, for one, with a forthcoming jewelry line; its metalwork and use of stones were a point of inspiration for the table sculptures, which combine rings of white, gray, and lavender ombré glass with steel armatures. Also influenced by the paintings and architecture of Ellsworth Kelly, the pieces have no real function – a major first for Iacoli. "I don't fancy myself an artist by any means," she says. "But I've been going through a lot of life changes, and I'm allowing myself to approach my work that way for

the first time. I love having the mental space to think about things other than, 'It has to be a light.'"

That seismic shift was in fact Hogan's doing. In addition to helping Iacoli refine her initial ideas for the sculptures and ultimately bringing them to life, he was the one who first pushed her to join him in experimenting at the intersection between art and design. "He saw an opportunity for me to expand my language in a way that I never really thought I could," she says.

Opening Ceremony

BY SEAN SANTIAGO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PIPPA DRUMMOND

Color is a recurring theme in Harry Nuriev's work. His Williamsburg apartment is famously blue; prior to that, he had what he calls "a long pink period," best seen in the debut collection the formerly Moscow-based designer launched at Sight Unseen OFFSITE in 2016. His way with color replaces old ways of viewing space and encourages new ones; it is divisive by nature and cinematic in scope.



CROSBY STUDIOS

These days, he's stuck on purple. In March, he re-contextualized a childhood merry-go-round at Collective Design, dousing it in a vivid shade of eggplant and enshrining it within a wallpaper mural of council flats similar to those he grew up near in Stavropol, Russia. Titled simply "My Reality," the piece transported the viewer not didactically to his homeland, but mimetically to the emotional frequency on which Nuriev encounters the world. He's working similar magic with a purple collection he's launching during this year's OFFSITE in collaboration with Opening Ceremony, the

downtown department store helmed by Humberto Leon and Carol Lim.

"We have a pretty similar DNA," says Nuriev, speaking about his company, Crosby Studios, and the highly specific world of Opening Ceremony. Both are considered sophisticated luxury brands despite a tendency toward levity and eccentricity in their work. The collection resulting from their union includes an entire roomscape full of purple furniture, brightly painted ceramic vessels, and even a line of brushstroke-adorned bags and clothing. Opening Ceremony once had a collection

featuring a hand motif; it's been reclaimed here as well and turned into a set of purple Surrealist lamps.

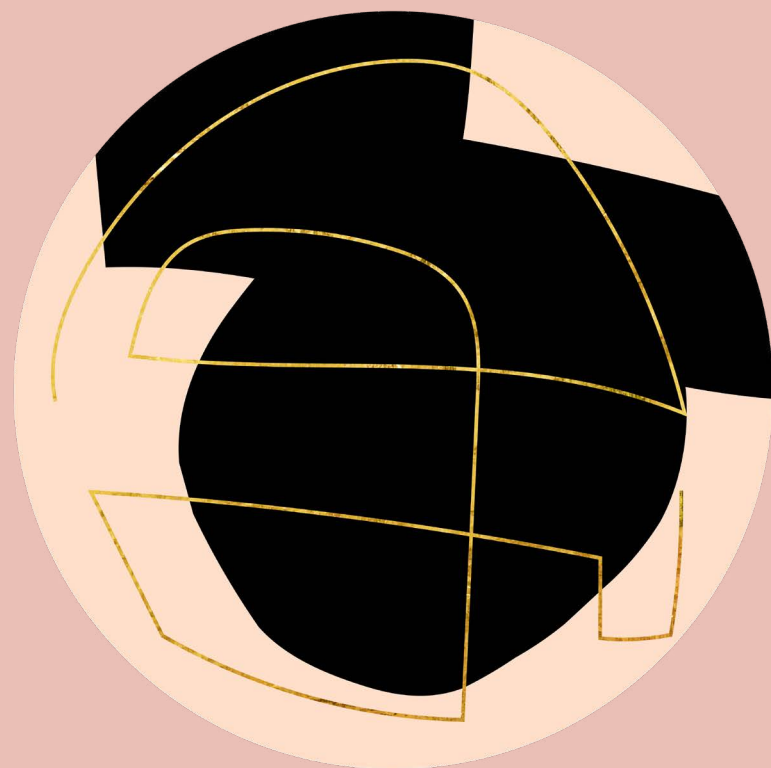
The project marks Nuriev's first time working with a fashion brand; he brought sketches and ideas to the table but made it a priority to "blur the boundaries between the disciplines," he says. "I tried to take as much as I could from the fashion world and put it into my work. We really met in the middle."



OPENING CEREMONY



Roll & Hill



BY SHOKO WANGER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEX PROBA

It may come as a surprise that Alex Proba once planned on becoming a dentist. “As a teenager influenced by your parents, you want to pick something safe,” she laughs. That inclination was short-lived, however – Proba chose to study design instead, launching her own multidisciplinary studio in 2013.

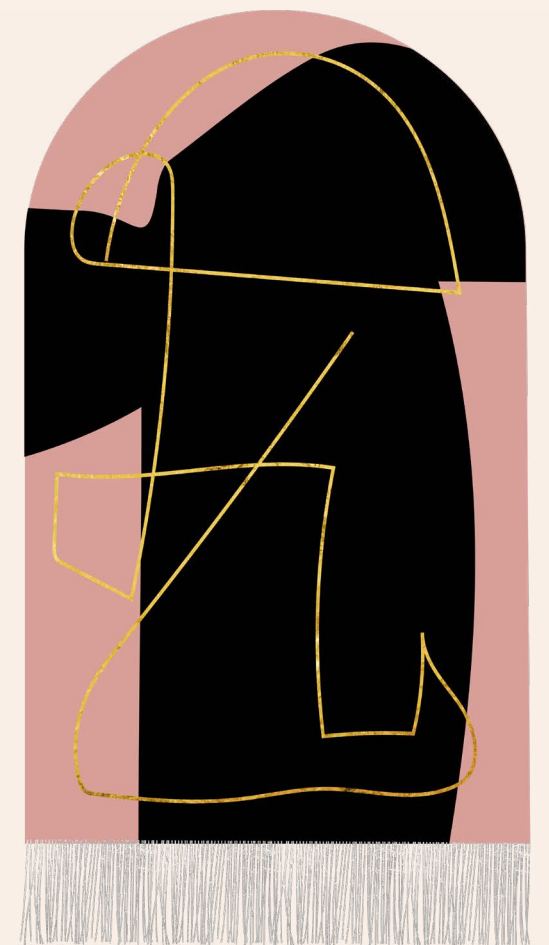
Known for inventive storytelling and an explosive use of color, Studio Proba often works in collaboration with fellow creative powerhouses: prismatic wallpaper for Texturae, collage work for Loeffler Randall, and a limited-edition furniture collection with Bower. Among her best-known work, though, is a personal project called A Poster a Day, for which she created more than a thousand images inspired by stories submitted through her website. When Proba eventually focused her attention on rugs, those posters served as a starting point for some of her first vividly hued creations.

Now, Proba is debuting a new four-piece rug concept titled Luster – blending bamboo silk, New Zealand wool, and metallic yarn – at Roll & Hill’s Mercer Street showroom. Punctuated by muted tones, the collection represents a break from her usual brights and was created in the spirit of embracing challenge. “It’s rare to find metallic yarn in rugs meant for everyday use,” she says. “It was interesting to introduce it into a medium where it doesn’t belong.”

Despite the practical hardships – in early trials, for instance, the gold flaked when the yarn was cut – Proba was inspired to revisit the ways in which we normally think

about gold, silver, and bronze. “Metallics can be seen as cheesy,” she says. “I wanted to make them look elegant rather than overdone.” To accomplish the task, Proba went for an element of surprise, combining unexpected textures, colors,

and materials, as well as a variety of pile heights. The crowning detail: silver fringe, indicative of the sense of play that pervades Proba’s work – and a fitting finishing touch for a designer who’s never played it safe.



Coming Soon

BY SEAN SANTIAGO
RENDERING BY TOM HANCOCKS

The Australian design brand Dowel Jones excels at Instagram, and no wonder – alongside the usual images of work installed in of-the-moment interiors, or furniture photographed against color-blocked backdrops, they’ve been known to publish campaign images by 3-D artist and designer Tom Hancock, whose renderings offer an ambiguous sense of space. The effect is a seemingly borderless world in which good design transcends the limitations of place and enters the collective consciousness via social media.



If that sounds a bit trippy, brace yourself for the pair’s collaborative installation in the basement of Helena Barquet and Fabiana Faria’s Lower East Side boutique, Coming Soon: The room has been reimagined as “Lobby,” a multi-sensory showcase for Hancock’s debut collection of chairs for Dowel Jones. “The title refers to the space serving as a transition between the physical and digital environment,” notes Dowel Jones designer Dale Hardiman. “Although we’re showing the chairs in the physical space, that experience will also be mediated through VR technology. We wanted what was designed in the digital medium to be presented almost identically in the physical realm.”

The chairs — upholstered cushions on frames of tubular steel — are of a piece with the global design vernacular, while elaborating on shape and scale in ways Hancock had previously only explored virtually. Here, Hardiman and Hancock speak about the collection, their processes, and the not-so-vast divide between the digital and physical.

DALE HARDIMAN: Being a 3-D designer is a relatively new thing. What training did you undertake — if at all?

TOM HANCOCKS: I didn’t go to school for anything. When I was younger, I messed around a lot in 3-D programs, and through a serendipitous Instagram situation, I ended up with a job as an interior architect.

DALE: With no formal training, do you feel confident in the work you produce?

TOM: There’s a confidence that comes from being an outsider and feeling like you’ve infiltrated

something, and a confidence that comes from knowing a little bit more than I did when I was just putting shapes together in a 3-D program.

DALE: That’s interesting because I studied furniture and yet I also never learned how to make it. Maybe that’s where we’re similar, being a bit outside our discipline. What is it about furniture that interests you as a typology?

TOM: I have an interest in things that are sculptural, and if you’re going to commodify something, furniture is the most direct translation that also has a kind of human connection.

DALE: I often meet graphic designers who want to move into jewelry in order to produce more tangible work. Did you feel this way about your shift into furniture?

TOM: Extremely. There’s this desire to finally have something real to experience.

DALE: How did you land on the lobby theme?

TOM: I think a lobby is exciting in its banality. It’s an environment that’s completely appropriate for furniture but you’re not trying too hard with it.

DALE: It’s an in-between space, where people spend time waiting for something else — so maybe they’re not even aware of what they’re sitting on.

TOM: True. This is the first time you’ve had someone else design for Dowel Jones. What was your take on the experience?

DALE: Adam, my business partner, is the more rational-minded one in that he can see things

quite straight-on and understand them; he’s also the maker between the two of us, whereas I float and dream a little more. We wanted to see an entirely different perspective on what our brand could be. You were an interesting choice in that you’re based in New York. We thought it would be interesting to work with someone outside the Australian design community.

TOM: Would you say that commercial viability impacts your design decisions?

DALE: Our commercial work is what gives us capital to produce more limited-edition works. For instance, for Milan last month, we produced this tattooed cabinet, and we’ve only ever made one incredibly expensive, laborious one. But those projects are really about learning — not just learning about making but learning about process, and about who we are as designers and what we’re interested in. If we were to stick to that model of commercial furniture, it would be hugely repetitive.

TOM: What’s your biggest critique of contemporary furniture design?

DALE: Well, because we are teachers as well, I can reflect on the experience of trying to teach the next generation of designers as well as being part of the next generation of designers. My advice is don’t get too consumed by the gratification of social media. We’re seeing a lot of inexperienced designers produce work that has gotten great attention, but they haven’t been able to follow through.

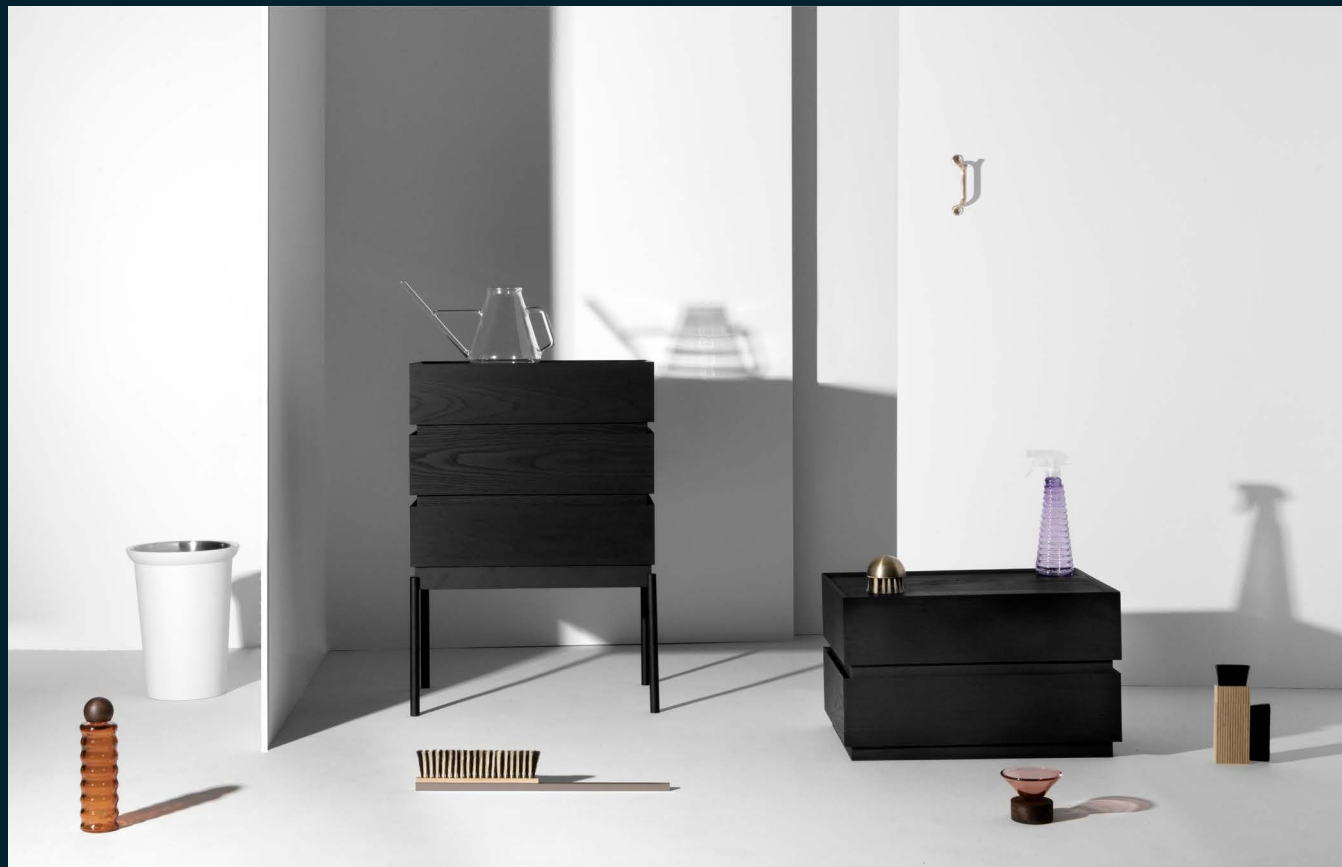
TOM: Do you think Australia lacks its own style in design?

DALE: There’s a lot of conversation about the Australian aesthetic, but I don’t think I’ve got the time to answer that question.

TOM: Well, then, to what extent do you feel like you represent Australia in your design?

DALE: That might be a little too hard, too. The reason I don’t want to answer these questions is because there are indigenous Australians. I’m third generation in Australia. I’m Irish Maltese. I can’t really say I represent Australian design when indigenous Australians are the oldest civilization on the planet.

Design Within Reach



BY JILL SINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE SCHUCK

When the exhibition *Furnishing Utopia* debuted at Sight Unseen OFFSITE two years ago, it followed a relatively strict set of parameters: 11 international designers would spend a week at two Shaker sites in New York and Massachusetts, engaging in an intensive workshop yielding new furniture and objects directly inspired by artifacts from those sites. Last year, a follow-up exhibition traced a similar path. But the third exhibition in the series – debuting this week at a pop-up space hosted by Design Within Reach in Soho – examines the impact of the Shakers on contemporary design in a much more conceptual way: Called *Hands to Work*, it features objects by more than 25 studios, each meditating on contemporary attitudes towards everyday chores.



FURNISHING UTOPIA



DESIGN WITHIN REACH



“When John and Wonhee of Studio Gorm started this project, they were looking at design philosophies that carry through Japanese, Scandinavian, and Shaker cultures,” explains Jean Lee of Ladies & Gentlemen Studio, who now helps direct and curate the project along with Studio Gorm, designer Chris Specce, and her L&G co-founder Dylan. “This year, we didn’t want to repeat the idea of designing in response to the Shaker aesthetic. We wanted to look more deeply into universal Shaker values, which celebrated the mundane activities that are very much a part of our connection to objects and to the world.” Raking leaves, dusting, chopping firewood, washing the dishes – these are typically viewed as tedious, burdensome tasks. But Hands to Work lends credence to the idea that a well-designed object can make everyday work a more mindful, ritualistic activity.

The exhibition features contemporary takes on towel holders, watering cans, levels, dish caddies, pencil sharpeners, clothespins, laundry racks, and shovels, among others. In addition, an interactive visual and sound component challenges visitors to more deeply consider the sensorial satisfaction of using common tools, with areas where they can rake sand, shovel dirt, and crush foam. Think of it as a form of stress relief – visitors “are allowed to make a mess,” laughs Lee, “but then they have to clean it up.”

The Primary Essentials



BY JILL SINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE SCHUCK

To create their textile pieces, the Seattle-based studio Grain used to travel all the way to Guatemala, working with artisans in the country where founders James and Chelsea Minola first met and fell in love.

But over the past few years, the designers have begun sourcing producers a bit closer to home: Their Lands Rug, a custom version of which they're debuting at The Primary Essentials in Manhattan this week, is woven by a 30-year-old textile mill near their alma mater, RISD. Inspired by aerial landscapes and crop circles, each rug is made from braids of un-dyed Canadian wool that are stitched together, a construction technique "based on early American colonial rugs, which were made from scraps

of fabric or leftover yarn by early settlers," says Chelsea.

The original idea for the rugs came to the pair after a 2016 residency in the Wallowa Mountains in Northeastern Oregon. "We did some hiking in the grasslands of the amazing Zumwalt Prairie, cutting through waist-high trails, and began thinking about the patterning of large land areas such as farms and prairies," says Chelsea. "Specific features such as the arcs and circles created by central pivot irrigation, and the alternating

patterns of harvested landscapes, came to mind as we started to piece our final shapes together."

For the different shapes that comprise each rug, Grain designs large templates that the mill uses as a guide to cut each segment and then piece them back together, creating a collage-like effect. At The Primary Essentials, a six-by-nine chocolate-and-cream version will blanket an entire wall until the end of June, a slice of rural America in the middle of the big city.



Saturdays NYC



BY LAURA MAY TODD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIA ROBBS

In the backyard of the Soho surf shop Saturdays NYC, Brooklyn design studio The Principals are exploring the border between the physical and sacred worlds.

For an installation called Golden Arch, they've installed an 8-foot-tall triangular wave structure made from the studio's modular, stackable Prism Planters. Spanning the garden from north to south, it symbolizes the emergence of the sun, moon, and stars from what Australian aboriginal cultures call "dreamtime" – the period during which the universe was created – into the physical world.

The project's configuration and subject matter are new, but the geometry of the planter's modular unit has become something of a calling card for the firm, forming the basis for everything from immersive architectural soundscapes for Ford to an upcoming public sculpture in Brooklyn's Starlight Park.

The inspiration for it struck while Principals co-founder Drew Seskunas was visiting his parents in his hometown of Baltimore, when he happened upon a cracked and worn-down sculpture by Norman Carlberg – an artist, teacher, and member of the Modular Constructivist movement – in front of a local high school. "There was a lot of overlap between what the Modular Constructivists and I had been doing, like playing with sculptural modularity and part-to-whole relationships," says Seskunas. After the Ford project, he says, "I wanted to push it further, to try to find more functional applications." The modules became planters, and the planters became structures, which will be on view at Saturdays NYC through May 20.



VISO

BY DREW ZEIBA

Giancarlo Valle didn't set out to design furniture. A trained architect, his practice moved first indoors to interiors, then even further to the things that fill them. An interest in objects initially manifested in the collecting of furniture from across eras, the inventory from which has cropped up in his designs for Phillip Lim, Thakoon, and Marilyn Minter. But soon, collecting wasn't enough: At Collective Design, he debuted his first series of furniture in a holistic installation that saw his own highly personal pieces alongside historical ones, such as an alabaster and silver Genet & Michon lamp, as well as contemporary collaborations, including a lamp designed with Ladies & Gentlemen Studio.



For Sight Unseen OFFSITE, Valle continues to present in this syncretic vein. In Tribeca, Valle is collaborating with Viso Project, a new, sustainability-focused textile studio. For Valle's Smile Seats, Viso provided a jacquard-loom cotton upholstery fabric in a pattern of decisive geometry and humorous blobs; the space will include more of Valle's furniture alongside objects from Viso's collections, including porcelain vases with Kama Sutra-inspired patterns, mohair blankets, and cotton tapestries. We sat down with Valle to discuss what it takes to make spaces and how he's always melding the past with the present.

● **You began your career as an architect. What inspired the move to furniture?**

I can't see architecture and furniture design as two separate fields. My interest in furniture and decorative arts came out of an obsession with collecting things, but

I started to seriously think about it when I began renovating my own home. It was quite naïve at first, researching and trying to find special pieces that spoke to me. Then having the opportunity to put it together in a space for the first time and create an immersive interior that was conceived of from the architecture down to the decor was very rewarding. Doing architecture exclusively felt limiting; it wasn't until we started completing our first interiors that we began to see the bigger picture and how it all can fit together.

● **How do the pieces you create fit together?**

The highest compliment would be for people to think my work was conceived of by different minds. I think design at its best is a conversation between objects and styles, between objects and spaces, and between spaces and buildings. So much of it has to do with memory, and how something makes you feel.

Something can really only make sense if it's next to something else.

● **You've been able to reinvent similar forms fairly substantially simply by switching out materials. How have you come to the materials palette you're using?**

I'm obsessed with upholstery and fabrics at the moment, mainly because they're so foreign to the palette of stone, wood, and concrete that makes up the vast majority of the architecture we create. We're also beginning to experiment with straw marquetry and eggshell and some of the crafts of the 1920s and '30s — taking these serious decorative art techniques and applying them in new, more playful ways.

● **It seems like historical design has a big impact on your practice.**

History is critical. Design has a historical arc, and I love tracing that arc, whether it's in architecture, interiors, or furniture. I love the stories behind the work.

There's a thought that the ideas of design do not belong to any individual person, but that they're part of a much larger history of their own — that our ideas are floating in the air and are available to anyone. I love this way of thinking, especially in today's culture of sharing and social media. It's liberating.

201 Mulberry

Show Guide

Field Studies

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN ARNOLD FOR 1STDIBS

Before this year, the actor Seth Rogen had never designed anything, having been too busy making movies about weed dealers, nerds, and superheroes. Yet he loves Danish modern furniture, and can fondly recall the textures on the walls and rugs of the sets from his favorite '80s and '90s movies. Those details – plus an affinity for street art – came in handy this spring, when Rogen was called upon to actually create an object, in collaboration with the New York design studio Bower: a massive painted trompe l'oeil mirror, borne of a phone call and a studio visit exploring the overlap between the pair's respective creative visions. Could anything sound as sweet, from the perspective of two curators who have long been obsessed with cross-disciplinary pollination?



Since we started Sight Unseen nine years ago, we’ve found ourselves writing again and again about the fertile ground between creative fields. So it wasn’t much of a leap from there to Field Studies, the flagship exhibition in our 2018 Sight Unseen OFFSITE show, for which that mirror was made. After wondering one day about how to involve our friends from the worlds of food, fashion, film, art, and music in our design week activities, we realized how epic it might be to pair each of them with a designer to collaborate on a functional object; six months later, 13 of those objects are now on view at our 201 Mulberry hub space. (They’re also available for sale on 1stdibs.com, with net proceeds going to a charity of each

pair’s choosing.) The pieces include a pastel pianet by Los Angeles interiors firm Wall For Apricots and actor Jason Schwartzman (at right), a synesthetic 3-D printer by The Principals and singer Angel Olsen, and an upholstered armchair by Kelly Behun and fashion designer Narciso Rodriguez.

Field Studies is the first exhibition you see when you walk into our hub, but so pleased were we with the premise that we decided, this year, to extend it through each show in the space. The nine other curatorial projects you’ll find both there and in the following pages all share a common theme of creative collaboration – which, come to think of it, is something the two of us do every day.

— Jill Singer and Monica Khemsurov,
Sight Unseen founders

- BOWER × SETH ROGEN
- CHRISTOPHER STUART × JULIA DAULT
- FERNANDO MASTRANGELO × BOYD HOLBROOK
- HARRY NURIEV × LIAM GILLICK
- HOME STUDIOS × NATASHA ROYT
- KELLY BEHUN × NARCISO RODRIGUEZ
- KELLY WEARSTLER × AIMEE SONG
- LADIES & GENTLEMEN STUDIO × KAAREM
- RAFAEL DE CÁRDENAS × MEL OTTENBERG
- THADDEUS WOLFE × IGNACIO MATTOS
- THE PRINCIPALS × ANGEL OLSEN
- TYLER HAYS × ANDREW KUO
- WALL FOR APRICOTS × JASON SCHWARTZMAN



Block Shop

BY DEBORAH SHAPIRO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGGIE SHANNON



For their installation at Sight Unseen OFFSITE, sisters Lily and Hopie Stockman – the duo behind the textile line Block Shop – are drawing inspiration from their own studio, high up in a historic bank building in downtown Los Angeles. “Our studio is filled with rugs and pillows and dogs and books and other human beings coming and going. We wanted to recreate that in New York,” says Hopie.



Voracious, eclectic readers, the Stockman sisters have envisioned the project as a reading room – a contemplative and comfortable nook where visitors are welcome to “plop down on something soft,” as Hopie puts it, and linger.

“In our digital world it takes extra discipline – for us at least – to set aside that quiet time to do the simplest thing: sit down and read the printed word. Our reading room is an invitation to do just that.”

The star of the installation is a brand-new rug series. It channels, in part, the minimalist-but-warm paintings and sculptures of artist and writer Anne Truitt, especially “the way she thought about color as a living thing,” says Hopie. “In her world, color is directional, it inspires felicity, it lies down, it dances.” Block Shop’s new work sees the sisters taking more risks with color than ever,

they say, while continuing to draw on the vocabulary of Sol LeWitt’s wall drawings, Anni Albers’s weavings, and their personal and professional connection to India, where all of the studio’s textiles are produced. When designing the rugs, the pair created watercolor sketches of architectural details in Art Deco apartment buildings lining Shivaji Park in Mumbai, then gave them to a team of master weavers outside Jaipur to translate into hand-dyed cotton and wool.

In addition to the rugs, the duo are currently working on more than a dozen projects, including artwork in hotels, retail space installations, and restaurants, as well as colored paper prints and upholstery fabric they’ll launch this fall. They’ve also designed a limited-edition zippered tote, launching this week as well: Constructed from recycled cotton scraps

by LA’s Everybody.World, it’s a roomy bag that “fits your Macbook Air, the complete works of Jane Bowles, a New Yorker, and snacks,” says Hopie. Perfect for readers on the go.



Lily and Hopie Stockman's Book Recommendations:

“Powers of Two by Joshua Wolf Shank explains the force driving some of the world's most inspiring and accomplished humans (hint: partnership). If you work with a partner in any capacity, read it.”

– HOPIE

“How to See by David Salle. David was a mentor in grad school, and his essays on everyone from Dana Schutz to Guston are a window into his elegant sensibility. Although I don't always agree with him, it's a provocative inquiry into What Makes Great Art.”

– LILY



“The Decoration of Houses by Edith Wharton: The original interior design tome was written in 1897 and is still essential reading for the design-minded. Edith Wharton's tenets of interior design are based on architectural principles, simplicity, and practicality.”

– HOPIE

“A Roomful of Hovings by John McPhee. Hopie and I and our two other sisters grew up in a McPhee household, and these profiles and essays from 1979 are peak McPhee. I gave this book to a friend who is opening a new gallery in New York as a ‘Go get ‘em’ present.”

– LILY

“Little Labors by Rivka Galchen is a strange, brilliant little book for anyone flummoxed by the first few months of caring for a new human while trying to make art/write/design.”

– LILY

“Her Body and Other Parties by Carmen Maria Machado is unlike anything I've ever read. It's a dark and sublime horror story/fairy tale about the female experience.”

– HOPIE

Vonnegut/Kraft

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Slow and Steady Wins the Race

FOR WEFT

When a textile has a pattern woven into it rather than just printed onto its surface, it gains a unique property: It's equally visually interesting on both sides. That was the first element fashion designer Mary Ping and furniture studio Vonnegut/Kraft seized upon when they teamed up to work with the new textile start-up Weft – which offers users the ability to design jacquard fabrics online and order them on demand – and it inspired their collaboration in more ways than one. The most obvious way is that at Sight Unseen OFFSITE, they're exhibiting the furniture they created using Weft textiles in a sort of mirror-image configuration, with one piece upholstered using the front side of each fabric they designed, and an identical piece upholstered using its reverse.

BY MONICA KHEMSUROV
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PIPPA DRUMMOND
STYLING BY GOZDE EKER



What's interesting, though, is that the furniture was essentially designed in reverse as well. Ping – who designs fashion and jewelry under her own name, and accessories and objects as Slow and Steady Wins the Race – initially connected with longtime friends Katrina Vonnegut and Brian Kraft on the idea of camp furniture as a way to create a collection that highlighted textiles. But, Vonnegut explains, "As the project progressed, we decided that the furniture forms should be a response to the geometry and tonality in the textiles, rather than vice versa. It's the opposite of how upholstery is typically used."

Sharing references like Josef Albers and transparency, the trio used Weft's online tools to create fabrics with strong geometries that shift subtly in color throughout, before following those geometries to create a bench, stool, and ottoman. "We all felt that more linear pieces – paired with a minimal color palette – would be the most elegant union between the act of traditional weaving and the modernized digital capabilities of Weft," says Ping. The resulting collection showcases the designers' shared interest in materiality and in practical design solutions; we asked them to have a conversation about what else informed their collaboration.

KATRINA VONNEGUT: How have you integrated woven textiles into your work in the past?

MARY PING: We work with woven textiles all the time for Slow and Steady Wins the Race, especially with bags. It naturally falls into our consideration of materiality: How is the fabric seen and why is

it particularly useful? This collaboration will be our first use of textiles in furniture. What was the first upholstered piece you designed with Brian?

KATRINA: Our Crescent Lounge. The upholstery on the piece is very geometric. We knew we wanted elements that would compliment the geometry of both the wood frame and the upholstered cushions.

MARY: Do either of you know how to weave?

KATRINA: No, but I've been around a lot of expert weavers and understand woven construction. I have a lot of experience creating textiles with machine knitting, though I guess that's different! How does furniture relate to your practice?

MARY: The studio is constantly making objects, from sunglasses to shoes, so furniture is just an extension of that daily practice. It's a deeper and more expansive exploration of utility in other formats. The things we put on our body can easily relate to the things we surround our body with.

KATRINA: What's the most important thing you think a good design accomplishes?

MARY: Good design can carve out its own temporal dimension. Even an ordinary thing, if designed well, can have an umami-like sensory experience that makes it feel like it can exist beyond its time. We believe tremendously in longevity. Longevity means durability, and long-lasting consistency, and it's all-inclusive in its thinking and application. What's the one piece of furniture in history you wish you had designed?

KATRINA: Probably the Transat Chair by Eileen Gray (1927). It features such a balanced integration of the connection hardware with its structural members, and such style in its detailing. While one might argue that the width and ergonomics of its slung lounge seat seem like they ought to evolve towards a more democratic proportion, the geometry and resolution of its profile are undeniable. Is there an object that you often return to for inspiration?

MARY: Anything by Achille Castiglioni, because he always honored items that had an everyday purpose. If you could choose anyone in time and in the world, which five people would you invite to dinner?

BRIAN: Aristotle, Shakespeare, Gena Rowlands, Randy Newman, and Steve Coogan.

KATRINA: Mary Shelley, Rudolph Steiner, Jane Campion, Rachel Carson, and Eileen Gray. You?

MARY: Joe Cesare Colombo, Katherine Hepburn, Martin Balsam, Robert Bresson, and Oprah.

Cold Picnic

FOR LEVI'S MADE & CRAFTED

BY MONICA KHEMSUROV

Originally founded by two fashion designers as an accessories brand in 2010, New York's Cold Picnic had its official break-out moment five years later, when it released an irreverent series of rugs and bathmats featuring reductive drawings of boobs and other "Private Parts," which circulated far and wide both on the Internet and in boutiques across the country. But rather than letting that particular success define them, founders Phoebe Sung and Peter Buer instead returned to a subtler approach, creating carpets inspired by their favorite pastime: watching movies. In the past, they've abstracted stills from Antonioni and Fassbinder into striking compositions of color and geometry; they turned to the films of Tunisian director Nacer Khemir for the visual cues behind their newest collection – Desert Trilogy – which launches this week at OFFSITE with the support of Levi's Made and Crafted.



● **This is your third rug collection inspired by film. Why do films make good rugs?**

PETER: When we were designing accessories, we used to look at old books on nature or old textiles. But when we started making rugs, it felt too direct to look at textiles and then go design one. We've both always been into movies, and I think the reason we draw so much of our inspiration from them is because when you watch one you connect with, you go through an entire experience. That feels like a richer starting point.

● **Why does the desert make good rugs?**

PETER: It's the most un-landscape of all the landscapes. We both love to design landscapes, but we have an aversion to recognizable ones. With the desert, you get to convey the sense of being in a place, but you also can't be sure it's a place. It could be anything or anywhere. And deserts feel endless. The sand is almost the color of a blank sheet of paper. It's like a starting point where you then get to decide what to focus on or bring out.

● **What can you say about your process of abstracting a film scene down to a rug motif?**

PHOEBE: We never know what we're going for until we're there. After the Passenger collection, which was the first collection based directly on a film (The Passenger by Michelangelo Antonioni), we kept watching movies we loved and trying to force them into the next collection. But that rarely works. Robert Altman hasn't worked, and I don't know

why. We both thought Three Women would be a no-brainer. So we have to branch out and in the process end up discovering a lot of new films we love.

When we created our Interiors collection, based on films by Werner Rainer Fassbinder, it was our first time seeing those films. They take place almost exclusively inside — you're staring at people's faces and their apartments, which is exactly what we were doing at the time, since it was just after the presidential election and we were depressed and holed up. The Fassbinder films were all so satisfyingly melodramatic, and he mixes hard and soft colors in such unexpected, effortless ways. When it came time to design, we still felt like we were designing landscapes. To us they were just landscapes of interior spaces.

The main things we look for are unexpected color combinations and a specific, almost painterly way of composing the scenes. We take loads and loads of stills, often from several movies, and print them out and look at them while we're designing.

● **Do you ever put the actual film still in Photoshop? Or is your process totally interpretive?**

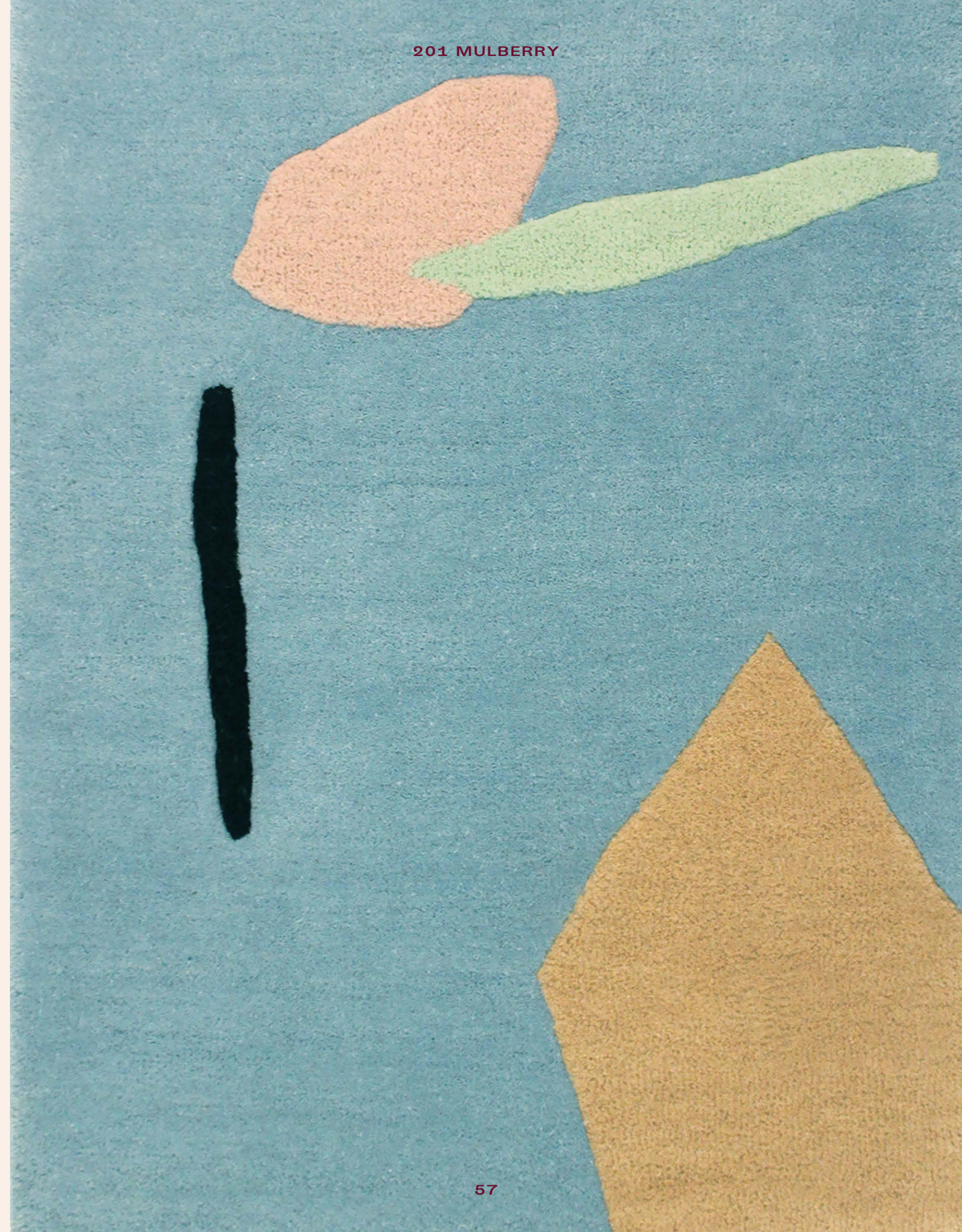
PHOEBE: Once or twice we've designed straight over the film stills. Actually, those are the most abstract rugs. Man in Shower, for example, started out traced; the stills we pull are super low-res, and this one was of a very cluttered bathroom. We looked for things like negative space, shadows, highlights, bits of color, and pulled those out. But mostly we pore over the stills and rewatch the movies, and then we sketch on our own. Peter sketches straight

into the computer. I can do that sometimes, but when I feel stuck I may paint or make collages to see what happens. We scan and convert everything we like into Photoshop so we can play with different color combinations. We don't take color directly from the films — the whole process works best when we let the films make us aware of certain colors, or a way of using colors. It's almost like we force memories into ourselves and then use them to create the collections.

● **What are your three favorite Khemir films, and why?**

PHOEBE: We've only seen three of them! They make up Khemir's Desert Trilogy, which we named the collection after. Wanderers of the Desert is about a village in the desert that might not really exist, a gang of children led by a genie who lives in a well, a magic ship, a curse, buried treasure, and a mysterious group of wanderers looking for heaven. It's nuts! The Dove's Lost Necklace is just as beautiful, and sad. What makes it great are the stunning medieval Andalusian setting, the music, and the colors. Bab'Aziz: The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul is the only one of the three set in modern times, and it's less dreamy than the previous two. It's a road movie — on foot across the desert — crossed with a folk tale.

I don't think I've ever seen another filmmaker use color the same way. Khemir uses every combination you can think of, but they always look like his.



Moving Mountains

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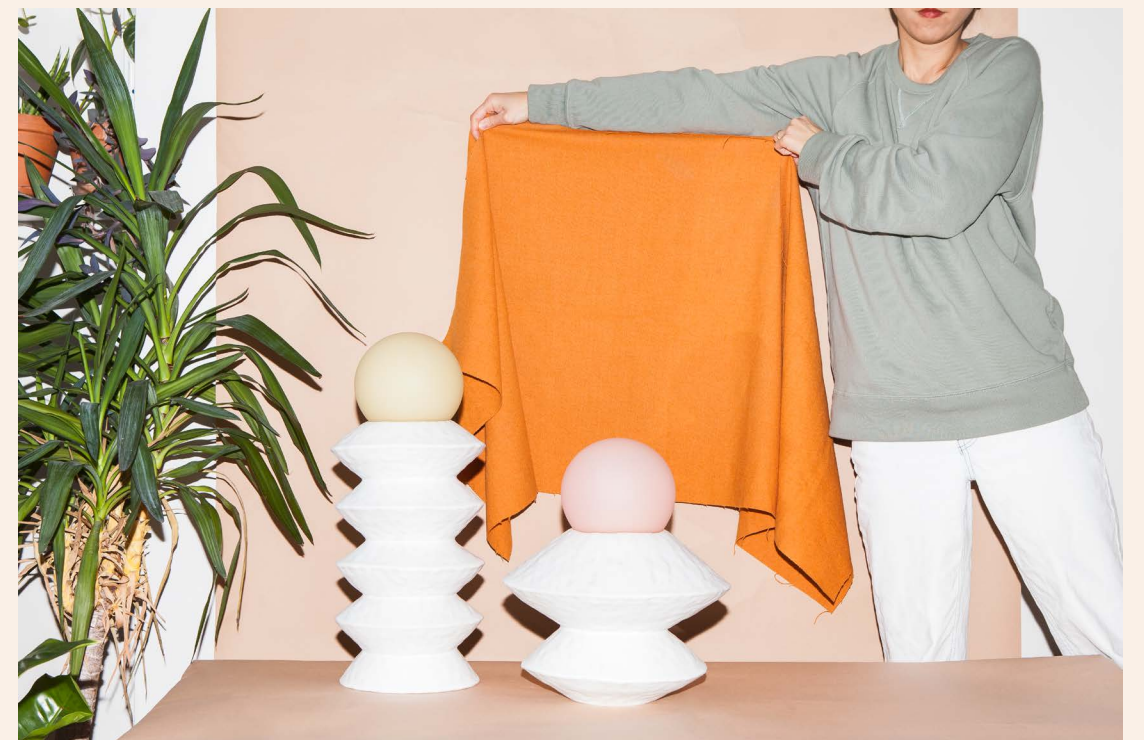
Giselle Hicks

FOR LEVI'S MADE & CRAFTED



BY BRIDGET MORIARITY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN SANTIAGO

“My house is my refuge, an emotional piece of architecture and not a cold piece of convenience,” the architect Luis Barragán once said. According to Moving Mountains studio founder Syrette Lew, this sentiment perfectly captures the spirit of her new collection of chairs and lights – the latter designed in collaboration with ceramicist Giselle Hicks. The installation is loosely based on the color palettes and surroundings Lew encountered on a recent trip to Barragán’s native Mexico.





Visually speaking, the influence of Lew's travels brings a sense of the past to Moving Mountains's decidedly of-the-moment aesthetic: the lounge chairs in medium-tone woods with white upholstery, the handmade ceramics. "I wasn't consciously wanting the installation to feel retro, but because the inspiration is coming from Mexico City, Oaxaca, and the architecture and interiors of Barragán, it maybe leans that way," says Lew.

Colorado-based Hicks — who designed and crafted the vessels that form the bases of Lew's lamps — is similarly influenced by history, citing ancient Greek and Chinese vessels as source material for her practice, as well as the work of mid-century potters like Lucie Rie and Ruth Duckworth. She brought some of those references to the lamps, forming terracotta clay into shapes that are simple and sculptural; some are fluted, others are round or columnal. The pieces are made using what Hicks refers to as "the most fundamental technique ever" — coil and pinch — allowing her to achieve a heightened sense of immediacy. "This was an assignment to make something with as few tools as possible," she explains.

The results look effortless, but there was a significant learning curve to the collaboration, which was executed completely digitally — Lew had been determined to work with Hicks ever since she spotted her on Instagram a few years back, but at press time, the pair had yet to set foot in the same room. "Syrette drew very detailed renderings that specified that the opening at the top of the vessels should be something like 4.771 inches, and I was like 'Lady, you know these are hand-made,'" says Hicks. The artistic compromise? Hicks standardized the opening at the bottom. "It never got to the point of being not fun," she says with relief.



Twyla

BY THE EDITORS

If you visited Sight Unseen OFFSITE last year, chances are you didn't miss the presentation by Twyla, the Austin-based online purveyor of limited-edition prints: Just inside the entrance to the show, seven artworks hung on a wall, accompanied by seven virtual-reality headsets that transported visitors to imaginary 360-degree rooms created by 3-D artist Tom Hancocks. The project perfectly illustrated how great art could inspire a great interior.

Now the brand is hoping to provide not only the inspiration, but the decor itself. This week marks the launch of Ratio, Twyla's first-ever, limited-edition line of luxury wall coverings, with the first four patterns curated by Sight Unseen. Aiming to highlight Twyla's ability to capture minute texture and detail, we asked four of our favorite architectural photographers to lend us a single image — each now available among Twyla's online art offerings — and then invited four artists to create paintings loosely inspired by their use of shadow, color, line, or shape. The paintings were then digitally scanned and manipulated by Twyla to create the mural-style and repeat wallpapers that are on view at our hub space — no headsets necessary. We spoke with each of the eight participants to get their perspective on the project.

TEKLA EVELINA SEVERIN

The Stockholm-based photographer and multidisciplinary designer — known for her colorful, graphic Instagram feed — works with clients such as Levi's, New Tendency, Muuto, The Gourmand, and Oak the Nordic Journal on projects including photography, set design, creative direction, exhibition design, and other color-related commissions.

"At Ricardo Bofill's iconic labyrinth building Muralla Roja, I took a series of photos interpreting the architecture itself. But here I wanted to turn the lens in the opposite direction: to the sea, where you see only a hint of the building. This photo says a lot about Bofill's inspiration and use of color; the building was inspired by the Mediterranean tradition of the casbah, with the purpose of contrasting nature and the outside."

FLORA AND FORM

Flora and Form is a multidisciplinary studio with a focus on painting and ceramics, led by artist Danielle Romero. The inspiration behind Romero's work is rooted in nature and its various forms, colors, and textures. More recently, architecture and design have begun to inspire her work, specifically the relationship between human habitation and the natural environment.

"The first thing that grabbed my attention in Tekla's photograph was the piercing blue ocean inside that very linear frame. I was immediately drawn to the juxtaposition of the hard lines of the opening and the organic flowing form contained within it. It was interesting to see this expansive body restricted to a specific shape, and I knew I wanted to attempt to translate that in the final piece."

201 MULBERRY



MATTHIEU VENOT

Matthieu Venot is a French artist whose images capture the urban environment. Focusing on the part rather than the whole, his photographs abstract his surroundings into colorful graphical vistas, turning the quotidian into the iconic.

“I took this image in the spring of 2017, in the south of France, near the city of Bordeaux. I like how the colors work perfectly together, and the fact that it seems like a stair to nowhere.”



HOLLISTER HOVEY

While working for years in health-care journalism and PR, Hollister Hovey found a creative release in painting. “My art was always about creating an aesthetic that would make rooms come alive. It’s a practical, design-focused view — and a fine-art gallerist’s nightmare,” she says. After years of experimenting with decor in the apartment she shares with her sister, the two started an interiors-staging firm called Hovey Design, for which Hollister creates much of the abstract acrylic art.

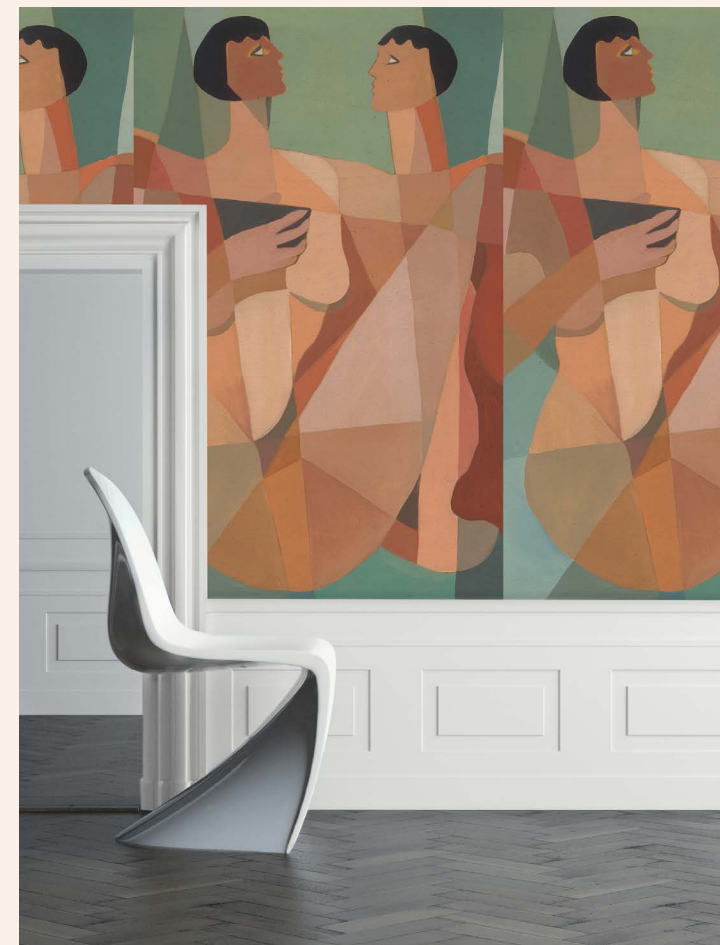
“In Matthieu’s photo, I loved the Art Deco colors and geometric lines that convey architectural detail but could easily be an abstract painting. The greens and pinks feel so current and fresh. When looking at all of his images together, you’re transported to a surreal, sherbet-drenched dream world.”



VISHAL MARAPON

Vishal Marapon is a Vancouver-based photographer who shoots commercial and editorial photography. His work has been featured in The New Yorker, Elle, and Kinfolk, among others.

“This photo was taken in Los Angeles. I was there for a visit working on a personal project that explored the culture of the city, and touched on colors and shapes that often find echoes in my contemporary practice. Part of my process is trusting my intuition, and this image was an example of something just catching my eye in the moment.”



JESSALYN BROOKS

Jessalyn Brooks spent a decade in Detroit, studying music and dance, playing jazz and writing music, before moving to Los Angeles a few years ago to perform in a cabaret show — and ended up staying. After dabbling a bit in retail, Brooks turned to painting, which is now her full-time work.

“I chose this particular image because of the colors. Living in Los Angeles, I’m inspired by the way the sun bleaches exterior paints — something I found in Vishal’s photo (which I didn’t know at the time was taken in LA!). I try to capture colors that fall just in between the obvious colors — the grays, the browns, the greens. I saw those colors in Vishal’s image and wanted to translate them.”

CLEMENTE VERGARA

Barcelona-based Vergara came to photography only a few years ago; having studied environmental engineering, he works by day as a sustainable development project manager for a water management company. His images – all minimalism, primary geometry, and soft colors – are often meticulously researched in advance, he says, but “I prefer to remain an amateur. Because I don’t see photography as a job, I can be more relaxed when shooting.”

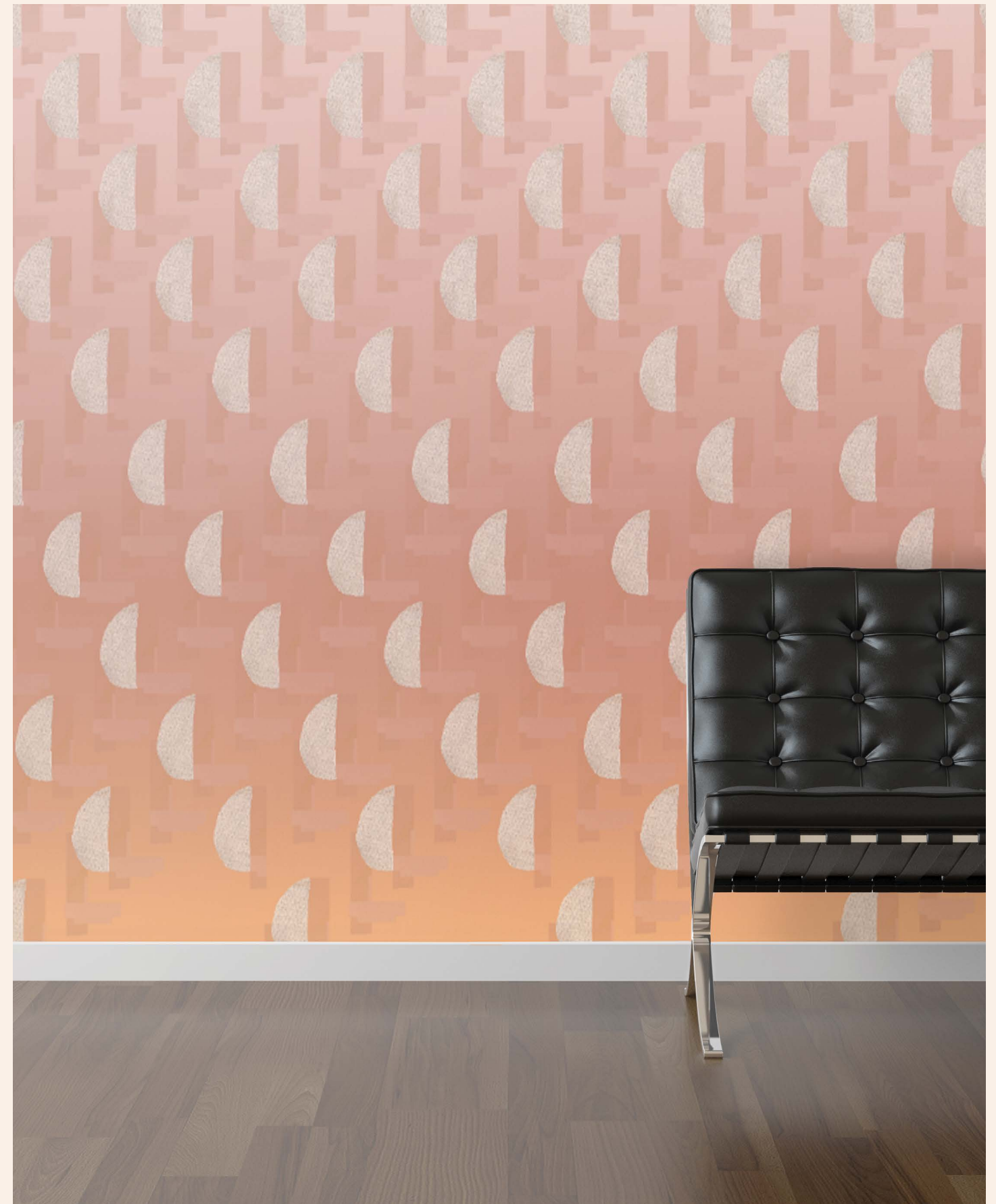
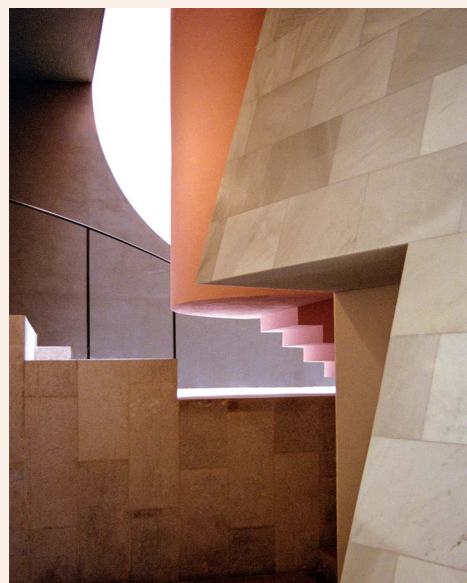
“This photo is of a building designed by the architecture firm MAIO Architects. Shooting famous buildings makes me happy, but what I enjoy the most is when I shoot a more modest or unknown building and succeed in extracting some otherworldly moment.”

KARINA BANIA

Karina Bania is a mixed-media painter whose work focuses on landscapes, geography, and space. Her paintings feature pale hues and layers of subtle texture, often incorporating traditional pigments and dyes in stains and washes. Focused on the harmony between spontaneity and intention, each discrete shape forces a conversation between the visible and unseen. Bania is based between San Diego and Baja, Mexico.

“The photograph I chose had such striking angles and shapes, but also a softness radiating from the play of light. I could envision it as a painting the moment I saw it. My paintings explore the abstract geographies that we navigate in our lives. In each painting,

there’s a conversation between emptiness and fullness, stillness and movement. I’m trying to portray the visible and invisible landscapes of place and connection.”



Kim Markel

FOR GLOSSIER



BY SEAN SANTIAGO

Upon the launch of Kim Markel’s first collection in 2016 – which recycled the plastic waste of old eyeglasses and lunch trays into translucent, popsicle-hued furniture – Curbed declared her a designer who had figured out “how to make new pieces and not feel guilty about it.” But Markel’s practice isn’t so much about assuaging late capitalist guilt as it is about asserting the need for a new kind of industry, one that isn’t defined by inputs and outputs so much as a continuous, self-sustaining cycle. Adios, obsolescence.

Based in Beacon, New York, Markel’s previous life as a public policy wonk equipped her with an unexpectedly pliable set of skills: She excels at minimizing waste through smart resource management. A self-professed autodidact, Markel found her way into furniture design as a project manager at the legendary Polich Tallix foundry in the Hudson Valley (which fabricates work for Jeff Koons and Matthew Barney, among others). At the beginning she felt “in the dark” about most things, but clocked in early and stayed late to learn the basic techniques she would need to develop her own design practice.

That first collection, Glow, saw her marrying her newfound strengths with those left over from her previous profession. She now thinks of her work, she says, “as an evolving conversation between ideas, technique, and materiality: an idea for an object, the development of a unique technique to make it, and then creating a material for it. All three pieces of the puzzle evolve as they inform one another.”

Markel’s new partnership with beauty brand Glossier, launching at Sight Unseen OFFSITE, is a perfect expression of that passion for marrying sustainability and style. The courtship started as any might these days, when Markel slid into the brand’s direct messages on Instagram. That note led to a coffee date, which led to a new series of translucent colored furniture pieces in reclaimed plastic composed partly of Glossier’s pink-hued packaging empties, which the brand asked its employees to collect for months. “The packaging is broken down and bonded with other plastics in large molds, then cured and sanded until an imperfect, slightly dissolved, candy-like effect is achieved,” says Markel. “It takes over 50 jars to make a single chair.”

The collection includes a cabinet, chairs, side tables, and mirrors, as well as a vanity table made from spun stone dust, a new material Markel developed using a by-product of the quarrying process. The material solidifies quickly, so the pieces are formed intuitively, on a

lathe. Of the aesthetic that drove the pieces, Markel says, “I often reference things that harbored magic as a child – Jelly shoes, lollipops at the bank, the splay of Bambi’s legs as he stands. This collection is made for an unapologetically gauzy Petra Collins world, where everything has a permanent filter of childhood magic over it.” A nostalgic way of thinking meets a modern way of working, paving the way to a brighter (or at least faintly glowing) future.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

BY JILL SINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN ALLEN

As a young, independent designer, how do you present your work to the public? In most cases, it's a skill that's learned by trial and error, but at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, it's something that's beginning to be taught.

This year, two recently famous American designers themselves — Pete Oyler of Assembly Design and Jonah Takagi of Atelier Takagi — launched an intensive studio class in the Designed Objects program, aimed at taking students on a holistic journey from concept to exhibition, with the ultimate goal being a showcase of ceramic drinkware. The results are on view at this week's Sight Unseen OFFSITE.

The participants, a mix of undergrads and graduate students, spent the winter session in technical workshops,

learning everything from basic slip-casting to cold-working. Spring was devoted to the more logistical aspects of building a practice, including how to prepare work for a photo shoot, how to create branding elements like an Instagram feed, and how to design and put on an exhibition within the context of New York Design Week. "On the one hand," says Oyler, "the course was about learning the technical skills related to ceramics. But on the other, it's about what it means to work as a team collaboratively within

a conceptual framework."

The final exhibition shows 15 interpretations of the drinkware theme, including a multipronged straw that was inspired by the aqueduct system in the designer's hometown of Oaxaca. "We asked the students to be very thoughtful about how they were presenting and crafting their narrative about this work," Oyler says. Here are five of our favorites.

GOBLIN SERIES by Hun Seung Lee

Inspired by supernatural beings from Japanese folklore, the Goblin Series is a collection of pitchers and cups that explores ideas about texture and balance. Each piece began as a molded, slip-cast porcelain form that was then modified by hand, either through hand-building, deformation, or the addition of texture — including dots that were applied one by one with a syringe. "There's a symbiotic relationship here between the pitcher and the cup," says Oyler. "The cup can't stand on its own; you'd have to drink the whole thing at once."



CONGLOMERATE SERIES by Kevin Solis

This project began with a reevaluation of traditional ceramic processes, with the goal of creating a new porcelain-based composite material. "This was a relatively experimental process in that all of those specks are dyed slip that the designer has crumbled up and incorporated into a clay body," says Oyler. After the pieces are fired, each one is subject to various methods of machining and boring to create different surface textures.



IN EQUILIBRIUM VESSEL
by Ana Buitrago

Inspired by stirrup spout vessels from pre-Columbian cultures, Ana Buitrago's In Equilibrium Vessel is a contemporary interpretation of an iconic form, with close attention paid to geometry, proportion, and balance. "She actually has a larger sculpture practice that's very focused on balance and geometry," Oyler says, "where she'll have a big thing that's balanced by a tiny piece of asparagus."

STRAWS AND AQUEDUCTS
/// DISTURBED STREAM
by Ramón Jiménez Cárdenas

These powder-coated ceramic shells are in fact multipronged drinking straws that were inspired by the aqueduct system in Cárdenas's hometown of Oaxaca. "Over the years the aqueduct has been disrupted not only by corruption in local politics, but also by the community itself," says the designer. "Roads, staircases, and even houses have been built over and across the aqueduct. These multiple broken sites became a metaphor for how our accessibility to water may sometimes be taken for granted. This exploration and research lead to rethinking the typology of the straw as an object to explore storytelling."



IT WAS NO MORE THAN A
FEELING
by Mingxuan Tan

Inspired by the roly-poly toys of her childhood, Mingxuan Tan's cups have a round bottom that creates an interdependent relationship between cup and coaster; the cup is unable to stand on its own. The hand-built pieces employ a number of glaze techniques, including lava glaze, but the yellow components are all created with Plasti-Dip, an industrial paint that's often used to soften and brighten tool handles.

OFFSITE Selects



Ben Barber Studio



Bellamoli Studio

Eight years ago, we launched a project during New York Design Week called Noho Next, a group exhibition where future design stars like Jonah Takagi, Jonathan Nesci, and Fort Standard debuted some of their earliest work. Last year, things came full circle as we returned to the curated group exhibition format at our 2017 show, changing the name to OFFSITE Selects but keeping the formula the same: We'd choose new works by a variety of designers – from established talents to brand-new studios – and present them much like a gallery would. In this year's edition, the works on view are international in scope and wildly varying in scale, from a chubby-legged, rusty velvet chaise by newcomer Jessica Herrera to six tiny marble vessels by Chile's Rodrigo Bravo. Highlights include Anthony Bianco's cast-glass lights, Yield's Corian-and-glass coffee table, the first-ever furniture piece from LA interior designers Etc., and ceramic table lamps by new studio In Common With. The full list of participants is below; if you don't recognize some of their names, you will soon enough.

BY THE EDITORS

- ADDITION STUDIO
- ALVARO GOMEZ-SELLES
& MARISA MUSING
- ANOTHER HUMAN
- BIANCO LIGHT & SPACE
- BELLAMOLI STUDIO
- BEN BARBER STUDIO
- BIRNAM WOOD & SUNA BONOMETTI
- BLACKTABLE STUDIO
- BRAVO
- DESIRÉE GONZÁLEZ GARCÉS
- ETC.
- FIALURE
- FORMABESTA

- IN COMMON WITH
- JESSICA HERRERA
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- MUT DESIGN
- NEW FORMAT
- NINA CHO
- OTHER KINGDOM
- PROJECT ROOM
- RIES
- STROMBOLI ASSOCIATES
- SUPAFORM
- TANTUVI
- YIELD

Norway × New York

BY JILL SINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE SCHUCK

Norway × New York, the annual exhibition in which we pair American designers with Norwegian ones, enters its third year at this week's OFFSITE. But the idea for the exhibition actually came about even earlier than that: On a trip to Norway in 2015, after meeting with a host of young Norwegian designers, we noticed that the emerging talents there lacked access to manufacturing – not unlike the circumstances here that led to a boom in American design nearly a decade ago. So we created a cross-cultural exchange in which the paired designers would spend six months working together long-distance on objects that employed an American workshop for fabrication and could be independently manufactured for future sales.



And then a funny thing happened along the way: Norwegian design took off. Young designers began banding together to exhibit at home and internationally, they started working more closely with local industries, and the entire design scene there became a force to watch. So with this year's installment of Norway × New York, the brief was less about an education in how to get things made and more about the true spirit of collaboration. In some of the seven projects, half of the work was fabricated in Norway, and half was made here. For instance, the ceramic components of Pat Kim and Ann Kristin Einarsen's table lamps were fabricated in Oslo, then

shipped to Brooklyn to be joined to their wood and glass counterparts.

The other teams include Objects of Common Interest × Falke Svaton, whose bouclé-upholstered Tube Chair was inspired by intersecting torus; Trueing × Andreas Bergsaker, who created lamps using contrasting panels of Douglas fir; Eny Lee Parker × Kaja Dahl, who designed Suprematist-inspired candelabras; Paul Loebach × Jonas Stokke, whose Tambour cabinet is inspired by everything from bodega shutters to roll-top desks; Souda × Stine Aas, who contributed two thin, perforated metal floor lamps; and Kin & Company × Henrik Ødegaard, who are debuting two ambiguous objects

that can be perceived either as chairs or stairs. The show, as it has been since the beginning, is supported by the Royal Norwegian Consulate in New York, who helped us recognize the talent of our Norwegian friends in the first place – before the rest of the world finally caught up.

Steven Bukowski



Hannah Bigeleisen

FOR HOTELTONIGHT

BY MONICA KHEMSUROV
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN PIVOVAR

Technically speaking, designer Steven Bukowski and artist Hannah Bigeleisen have designed a bedroom together before – the couple have been married for two years, and share a home in New York’s Bushwick neighborhood – but this week marks the first time they’re creating one that the public is invited to explore.

Bukowski, who helms his own design studio, and Bigeleisen, who is a painter and sculptor, began collaborating professionally on furniture last year; for this year’s OFFSITE, they’ve teamed up with the support of HotelTonight – the app that offers booking deals on some of the world’s best design and boutique properties – to envision the ideal hotel suite, which they’ve brought to life in a 100-square-foot space inside the show.

Merging Bukowski’s eye for form with Bigeleisen’s eye for color and pattern, the black-and-white-striped suite’s

furnishings include a brand-new bed, dresser, lounge chair, lamp, planter, and – naturally – the coolest Yves Klein Blue minibar we’ve ever laid eyes on. We asked the pair to tell us more about how the project came about.

● **What are both of your backgrounds?**

STEVEN: I was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. My family has a long history of working in craft and fabrication, which gave me an early interest in the arts. Architecture is a main inspiration for me, which began

with field trips to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and various Frank Lloyd Wright houses in the Buffalo area. Lately I’m interested in the interaction of form, surface, and color, and how they can be used to alter space.

HANNAH: I was always most influenced by the Conceptual and Minimalist artists that came out of the Modernist era, but more recently, I’ve been looking at architectural detailing to derive patterns to augment space on a large scale. Currently, I’ve been cranking out stripe paintings, and look forward to building some large geometric sculptures over the summer.

● **You’ve only been professionally collaborating for a year – how did you come to start working together?**

STEVEN: I’d been playing around with new forms in my studio, mostly out of plywood, so I could quickly ideate. I made a small bench out of the forms and texted a photo to Hannah, and that’s where it began.

HANNAH: It’s true! I couldn’t not paint it! I loved the form, but knew it needed color to add depth and variation, to really make it pop. The transition to collaborating was easy. We’ve been talking about our ideas and studio practices with each other for more than 10 years.

STEVEN: That first collab was more of a call-and-response. I made the form, and Hannah painted it to alter the viewer’s perception of it.

HANNAH: What separates this collection is that we’ve been working together on all aspects of the project: The furniture,



wall coverings, upholstery, and accessories were all decided on together.

● **What did you discover about your similarities or differences through that first project?**

STEVEN: I was a little hesitant at first about introducing bold, vibrant colors and patterns to the plywood pieces we had developed, but once I saw the first one, I knew it was what they'd been missing from the beginning.

HANNAH: I think our differences come from our backgrounds as an artist and designer. Steve analyzes process, feasibility, cost, and materials when working on a project. I just start with an idea and make it work from there. I've learned a lot about material processes and how to build forms more efficiently from our collaboration.

● **What drove the new collection?**

STEVEN: The Bubble series is about pattern creating visual rhythm and play for the viewer. This series is a departure from my previous work, which was really reductive in concept and form. Before, it was about only what was necessary to convey the shape of the piece, while focusing on the negative space that the piece included. The Bubble series is totally the opposite; it takes a horror vacui approach of filling space completely.

● **What are the hallmarks of a great hotel design for each of you?**

HANNAH: My favorite hotels always have a great view, windows that open so I can get fresh air, enough blankets for the bed,

and a fluffy robe. A stocked mini-bar never hurts, either.

STEVEN: Some of the best experiences I've had staying at hotels include the many Art Deco period hotels in South Beach, Miami. I'm drawn to them because of the detail involved on every level – molding, fixtures, colors, stucco, the works. It's all preserved in a way that I feel like I know what it would be like to live in one of those spaces and times.

● **How does this project represent your ideal hotel room?**

STEVEN: It doesn't just feel like a single room with a single function. There's a place to rest, a place to read, a place to sleep, and space to entertain.

HANNAH: This room was created as a dream space, or a dreaming space. All of the normal conventions of space are suspended through pattern, form, and repetition. I'm always looking for spaces to dream in, especially when I'm staying in hotels. Too often, hotel rooms are sterile, with nondescript furniture that's meant to be invisible rather than noticed. This space is the opposite, with wall treatments that augment the perception of the room and reinforce the linear elements of the furniture.

● **Steven, what hotel design trends have you been noticing lately? And Hannah, what about hotel art?**

STEVEN: I've seen that many hotels – not just the luxury ones – are taking their design more seriously, in that the details and styling are really considered, perhaps even reflecting their locale in an interesting way.

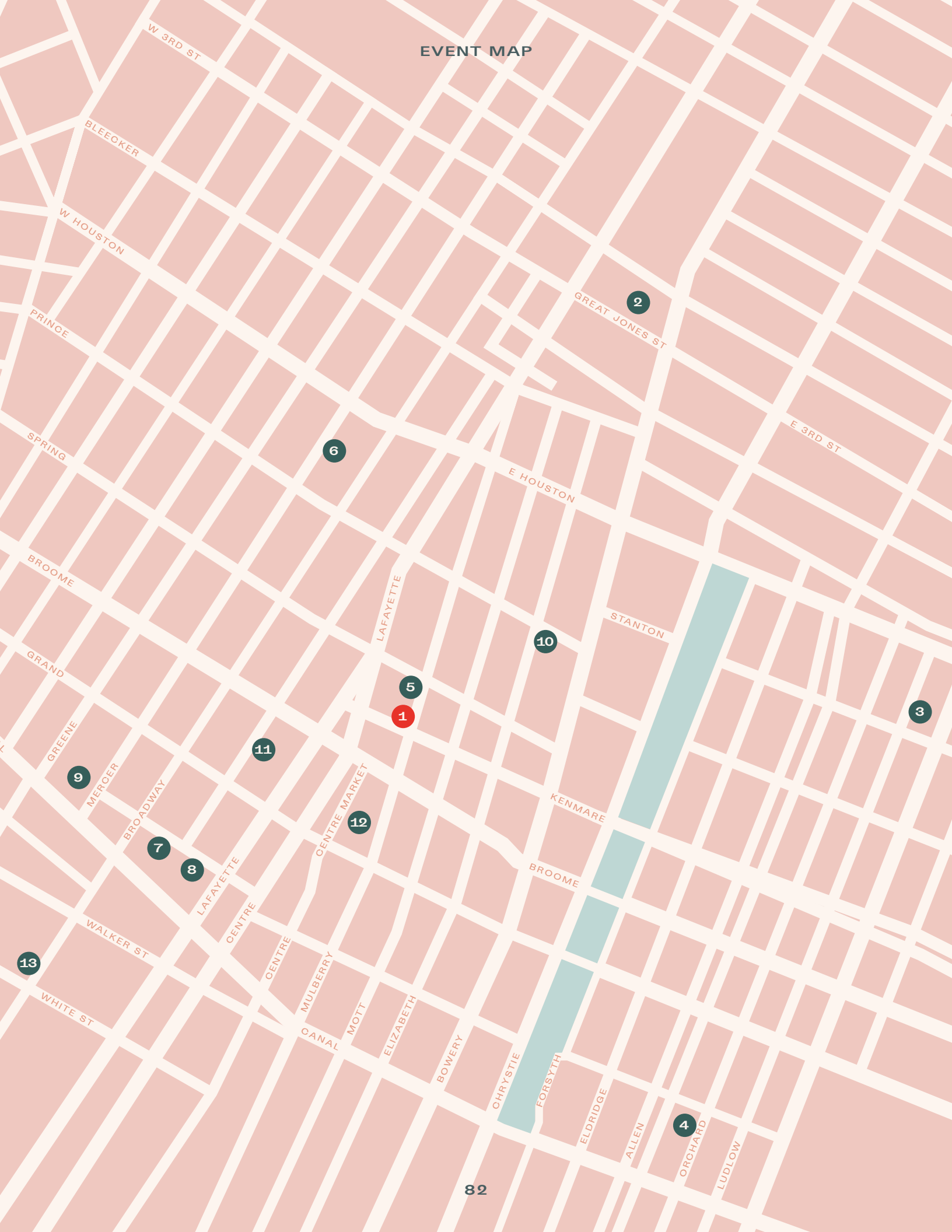
HANNAH: Personally I think hotels are missing a huge opportunity to showcase and support local artists. They use mass-produced digital prints to save money and cover the walls, but literally anything would be more interesting to look at than a routinized landscape, or other 'nature-y' printed canvases.

● **If you could move into any hotel permanently, which one would it be and why?**

STEVEN: Probably the Wythe Hotel or Williamsburg Hotel. They're both awesome works of architecture that are styled really beautifully, inside and out.

HANNAH: I would love to have an extended stay at the Box House hotel in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I love all the quirky details and architectural elements. Recently we also went to a fun party at the Yotel, which totally transported me from the grind of Midtown to a small, faraway, warm oasis, with an incredible view of the city lights from the balcony.





EVENT MAP

1 OFFSITE HUB SPACE
May 17-20
201 Mulberry
New York, NY 10012

HOURS
Thursday to Sunday:
11am-7pm

This year’s show features group exhibitions as well as Sight Unseen–curated projects focused around the theme of collaboration. Highlights include an exhibition pairing designers with other high-profile creatives; a suite of translucent furniture by Kim Markel for Glossier; the return of Norway x New York; and an immersive, hotel-themed installation by Steven Bukowski and Hannah Bigeleisen for HotelTonight.

2 3.1 PHILLIP LIM
May 16-23
48 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012

HOURS
Monday to Saturday:
11am-7pm
Sunday: 12pm-6pm

OPENING PARTY
Thursday, May 17, 7pm-9pm
RSVP:
newyork@31philliplim.com

At fashion designer Phillip Lim’s NoHo flagship, Ben & Aja Blanc have installed a new collection including Donald Judd-inspired chairs, a companion side table, layered “mirror collages” in peach and antique tones, and large-scale wood-turned vessels.

EVENT GUIDE

3 ASSEMBLY NEW YORK
May 16-20
170 Ludlow Street
New York, NY 10002

HOURS
11am-7pm

The Berlin-based duo Llot Llov debuts two new projects at Assembly New York on the Lower East Side: A fringed pendant lamp called Fran, and the latest addition to their ongoing Osis line, a series of colorful, salt-treated side tables.

4 COMING SOON
May 16-20
37 Orchard Street
New York, NY 10002

HOURS
Wednesday to Sunday:
12pm-7:30pm

The basement of the Lower East Side boutique has been reimagined as “Lobby,” a multi-sensory showcase for Tom Hancocks’s debut collection of chairs for the Australian brand Dowel Jones.

5 CREATURES OF COMFORT
May 16-23
205 Mulberry Street
New York, NY 10012

HOURS
Monday to Saturday: 11am-7pm
Sunday: 12pm-6pm

OPENING PARTY
Wednesday, May 16, 6pm-9pm

Studio Sayso, a new firm from designers Sophie Lou Jacobsen and Sarita Posada, launches Collection 01, featuring colorful tables, chairs, and lamps inspired by Posada’s hometown in Colombia, where each house is painted a different hue.

6 FURNISHING UTOPIA
May 19-22
158 Mercer Street
New York, NY 10012

HOURS
Saturday to Sunday: 10am-6pm
Monday to Tuesday: 9am-5pm

OPENING PARTY
Saturday, May 19, 5pm-7pm

CLOSING PARTY
Saturday, May 22, 6pm-8:30pm
at the Design Within Reach SoHo Studio, 110 Greene Street

Furnishing Utopia’s Hands to Work exhibition features objects by more than 25 studios, each meditating on contemporary attitudes towards everyday chores as well as the historical legacy of the Shakers. An interactive visual and sound component challenges visitors to consider the sensorial satisfaction of using common tools.

7 OPENING CEREMONY
May 15-29
33-35 Howard Street
New York, NY 10013

HOURS
Monday to Saturday:
11am-8pm
Sunday: 12pm-7pm

Designed in collaboration with Opening Ceremony, Harry Nuriev of Crosby Studios is launching a line that includes a roomscape of purple furniture, brightly painted ceramic vessels, and brushstroke-adorned bags and clothing.

EVENT GUIDE

8 RETROSUPERFUTURE
May 16-30
21 Howard Street
New York, NY 10013

HOURS
Monday to Saturday:
12pm-8pm
Sunday: 12pm-6pm

OPENING PARTY
Thursday, May 17, 7pm-9pm

Designer Arielle Assouline-Lichten of Slash Objects has created a temporary installation in the form of a Japanese-inspired rock garden, with new collection pieces nestled amongst pebble-like pieces of recycled rubber.

9 ROLL & HILL
May 17-July 1
3 Mercer Street
New York, NY 10013

Due to a fire in the Roll & Hill showroom, this presentation has been postponed.

Multidisciplinary designer Alex Proba has installed a new four-piece rug concept titled Luster – blending bamboo silk, New Zealand wool, and metallic yarn – at Roll & Hill’s Mercer Street showroom.

10 SAMUJI
May 16-27
12 Prince Street
New York, NY 10012

HOURS
Monday to Saturday:
11am-7pm
Sunday: 12pm-6pm

OPENING PARTY
Thursday, May 17, 7pm-9pm

At the Finnish fashion brand’s Soho flagship, a trio of sculptures by Jamie Iacoli and John Hogan are on view. Inspired by the paintings and architecture of Ellsworth Kelly, each piece combines a steel armature with rings of ombré glass.

11 SATURDAYS NYC
May 17-20
31 Crosby Street
New York, NY 10013

HOURS
Thursday:
8am-8:30pm
Friday: 8am-7pm
Saturday to Sunday:
10am-7pm

OPENING PARTY
Thursday, May 17, 6pm-8:30pm

In the backyard of Saturdays NYC, The Principals present Golden Arch, an 8-foot-tall triangular wave structure made from the studio’s modular, stackable Prism Planters.

12 THE PRIMARY ESSENTIALS
May 17-June 30
3 Centre Market Place
New York, NY 10013

HOURS
Monday to Saturday:
12pm-7pm
Sunday: 12pm-6pm

Seattle-based studio Grain is debuting a custom vesion of its Lands Rug at TPE Manhattan. Inspired by aerial landscapes and crop circles, each rug is made from stitched-together braids of wool, a construction technique drawn from early American settlers.

13 VISO
May 17-20
62 White Street
New York, NY 10013

HOURS
Thursday to Sunday: 10am-6pm

OPENING PARTY
Thursday, May 17, 7pm-9pm
RSVP: viso@visoproject.com

In Tribeca, architect and designer Giancarlo Valle has collaborated with new textiles start-up Viso Project, who provided the upholstery fabric for Valle’s Smile seats. In addition, the space features vignettes spotlighting Valle’s furniture alongside other objects from Viso’s collections, including blankets, tapestries, and cushions.

SPONSORS



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COLOPHON

Sight Unseen OFFSITE is a showcase of the best new contemporary works by independent designers, curated by the editors of Sight Unseen.

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