

# Modern World

CURATED BY  
Adrian Madlener

ILLUSTRATIONS BY | @MIGUELPORLAN  
Miguel Porlan

Sheyang Li and Teo Rhe of Bureau Parso, pictured here in their workshop, are just two of the talented designers we're featuring whose work is truly special.

## THE DWELL 24

Meet the Dwell 24—our yearly lineup of the best emerging designers in the world. From lamps inspired by cacti to a chandelier composed of ceramic phalluses, this bumper crop of creators is setting the scene for the design of tomorrow.

PHOTO: MELISSA SCHRIEK

MY STUDIO IS...



96%  
A hive of productive clutter

4%  
A study in head-clearing minimalism

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE...

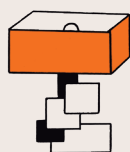
46%  
Bauhaus



29%  
Memphis

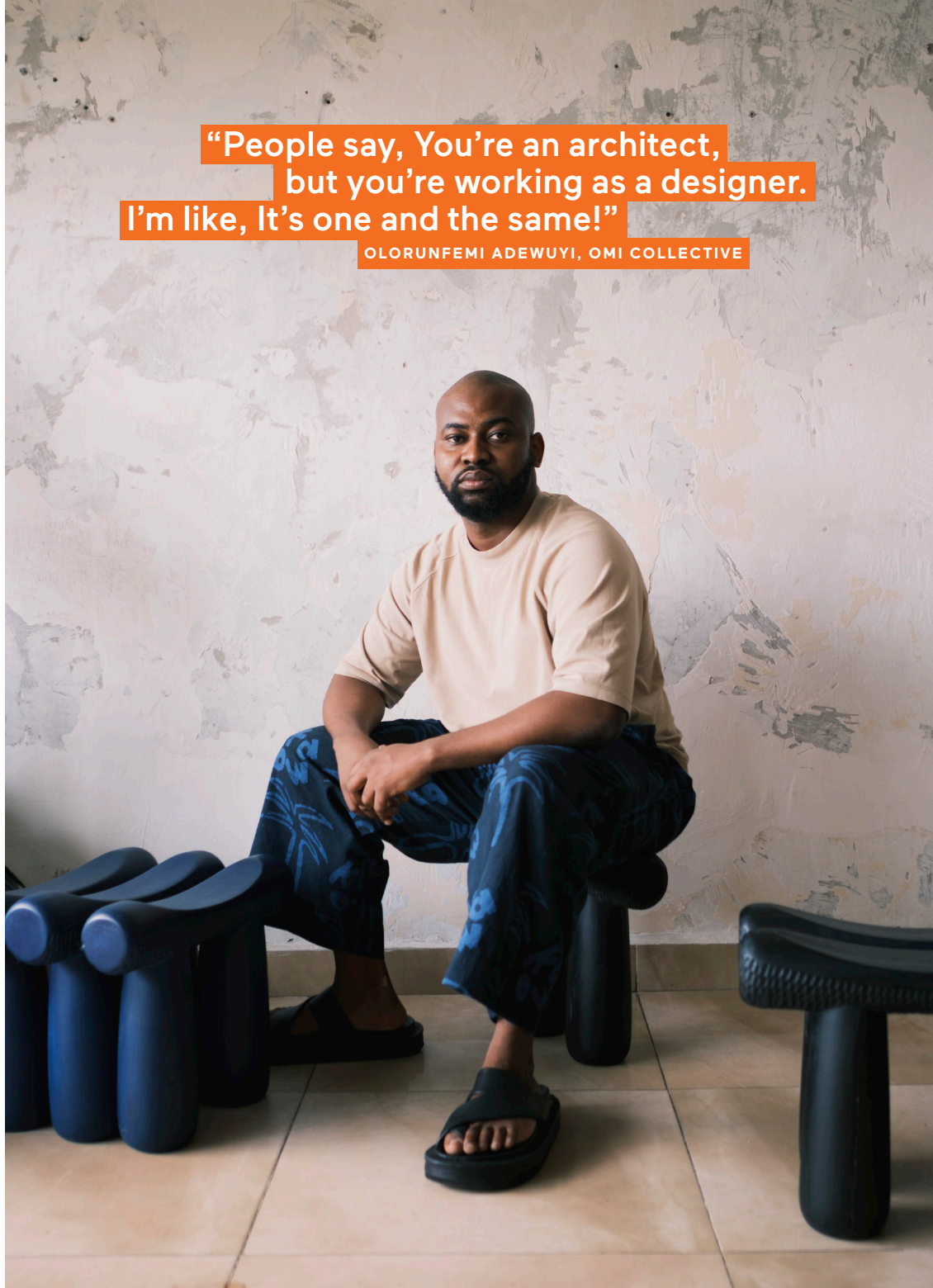


25%  
Brutalism



“People say, You’re an architect, but you’re working as a designer. I’m like, It’s one and the same!”

OLORUNFEMI ADEWUYI, OMI COLLECTIVE



LAGOS, NIGERIA / @OMI.CV\_

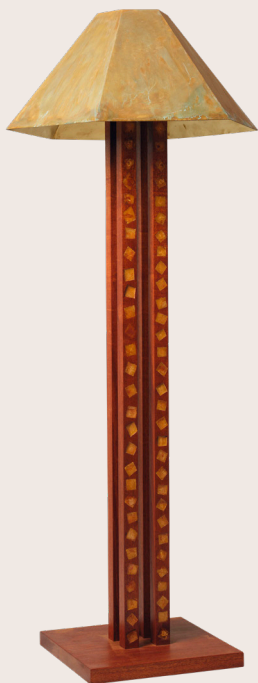
Omi Collective

For Olorunfemi Adewuyi, furniture can blur the lines between architecture and interior design. While he has both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in architecture from Covenant University in Nigeria, he’s not fussy about titles: “People say, You’re an architect, but you’re working as a designer. I’m like,

It’s one and the same!” Taking its name from the Yoruba word for water, Adewuyi’s Omi Collective project is fluid in scope; “Furniture has always been a natural extension of my practice. It’s something you can use to quickly test your ideas.” Now, he makes pared-down pieces like the OS2 stool, which separates

into smaller, individual seats. Its form draws from tropical modernism. You might see traces of Ashanti stools or Malian ladders in Adewuyi’s staple-shaped creations; some have even compared them to Japanese torii gates. To this, Adewuyi shrugs: “There’s no monopoly on form.”  
—Nathan Ma

PHOTO: STEPHEN TAYO



SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL /  
@RAFAELTRIBOLI

## Rafael Triboli

Former art director Rafael Triboli began assisting carpenters in 2016. "It was a great discovery in my life," the self-taught designer says. He found inspiration in Donald Judd's plywood works and similarly decided to explore the intersection of art theory and furniture design. Triboli's visual language—hardwood carved with decorative inlays filled with carnauba wax and bronze—came through trial and error. "Wood is kind of a live material, so I have these mixed feelings of respecting it and, at the same time, not respecting it too much," he says. For a floor lamp, numerous wax-filled squares run down narrow mahogany beams. Triboli painted (and stripped) the wood until the color was how he envisioned it. "I had started to lose hope," he says of the process, "so it's great to see that the finished piece is how it's supposed to be." —Jinnie Lee

↑ Floor Lamp

MEXICO CITY / @EX\_\_SOUP

## Ex Soup

Mexico City-based Ex Soup's name comes from the material favored by its founder, Javier Guzmán Cervantes: readily available plastic, asphalt, glass, concrete, and steel that begin as molten "soups" and solidify. These residual materials are then formed into sculptural furnishings. "There's often little questioning of where these materials come from, what their environmental impacts are, and who ultimately pays the cost," says Guzmán Cervantes. "Much of the industry remains focused on polished outcomes. I've always been more interested in the informal, the intuitive, the in-process—the kind of design you see in the streets of Mexico City," he says. With an ad hoc but refined approach, he turns industrial waste and other found items into visually compelling furnishings like the Mesa Terracota table, crafted out of what appears to be discarded concrete blocks and a pane of smoked glass. —Adrian Madlener

➤ Mesa Terracota Table



LAGOS, NIGERIA & DAKAR, SENEGAL /  
@SALUIWADISTUDIO

## Salù Iwadi Studio

For architect, designer, and artist Toluwalase Rufai and his business partner, Sandia Nassila, design is about building bridges. They operate Salù Iwadi Studio across West Africa: Rufai works from Lagos, Nigeria, and Nassila from Dakar, Senegal. They're a distinctly 21st-century design duo (they met on Instagram), and their work is wide-ranging, drawing from the African diaspora and its many histories. Their Patewo chair, a svelte X-shaped unit built from interlocking steel bars, references a hairstyle in which braids come together like clasped hands (*patewo* means "ap-please" in Yoruba). "There are borders and frontiers that separate our different countries, and languages, too. But at the root of our cultures, there are so many similarities," Nassila says. While Rufai drives creative development, Nassila draws from her work as a curator and brand strategist. "I've been making stuff for years. She created the world in which they exist," Rufai says. —NM

↑ Patewo Chair

### DESCRIBE WHAT YOU MAKE

Hella gay ceramics.  
Kevin Quale

Incarnations of emotional states.  
Duyi Han

Textile luminaires inspired by vegetal elements.  
Inés Llasera, Kauani

Things that I daydream about.  
Kiril Georgiev, Georgiev Zabet

I create sculptural objects from metal—tender forms shaped by hand, balancing industrial strength with emotional softness.  
Hannah Kuhlmann, Studio Kuhlmann

### DO YOU HAVE A DAILY CREATIVE RITUAL?

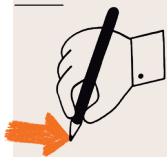
My ritual is to just try to eat three meals a day and work out.  
James Cherry

Consulting my Spotify project-specific mood board playlist.  
Duyi Han

I play the sitar...in classical Hindustani style.  
Priyanka Shah, Shed

When I am ready to start creating, I try to get out of my own way.  
Jensin Okunishi

## I AM...



- 88% Right-handed
- 4% Left-handed
- 8% Ambidextrous



COLOGNE, GERMANY /  
@STUDIOKUHLMANN

## Studio Kuhlmann

With her medium of welded metal, Cologne, Germany-based designer Hannah Kuhlmann iterates on the everyday furnishings in our domestic spaces, creating objects that challenge the sometimes antiseptic precision of industrial production. “I sketch the objects I envision and bring them to life with my own hands and give them a personal signature,” she says. “The objects I create are more like companions—entities you live with.” Although perfecting the use of tubular stainless steel in distinctive forms has been her main preoccupation, Kuhlmann has begun to incorporate softer elements but hasn’t left metal behind. “When designing a daybed, I no longer think only in terms of upholstery,” she says. “I think of the upholstery as a garment and have begun to decorate my designs with jewel-like adornments.” —AM

↑ **Lucid Dreams Daybed**



## INSTAGRAM IS...

- 71% A promotional tool
- 13% An amplifier for design ideas
- 8% A homogenizing force in the design world
- 8% I don’t use Instagram

EINDHOVEN, THE NETHERLANDS / @BUREAU.PARSO

## Bureau Parso

Endeavoring to uncover the hidden beauty of materials we might otherwise take for granted, designer pair Bureau Parso crafts sculptural furnishings that challenge how that matter is normally used. French designer Sheyang Li and Korean designer Teo Rhe both studied at the Design Academy Eindhoven in the Netherlands but only joined forces after exhibiting together as part of a Milan Design Week group show. “I was casting metal, and he was working with sandblasted wood,” says Li. “When we got back to Eindhoven...we started spending time in each other’s studios and just tried things out.” Bringing together their respective crafts, the pair uncovered the potential of casting metal against wood to capture the imprint of timber’s natural grain. “We enjoyed the process,” Rhe says, “and... exploring together made it easier to commit, to take risks, and to keep going when things didn’t work.” —AM

➤ **Aluminum Veneer Table**

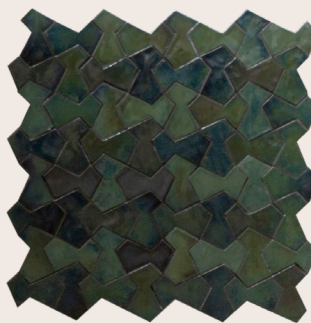


TETOUAN, MOROCCO /  
@AMINEASSELMAN

## Amine Asselman

Finding a happy medium between his studies in architecture and art, Tetouan, Morocco-based talent Amine Asselman has developed a design practice all his own. He translates the mathematical quality of Islamic art and the centuries-old artisanal tradition of *zellige*—glazed terra-cotta tiles—into contemporary designs and interactive installations. “There’s room to develop, expand, and open up new paths in this enigmatic and complex art,” he says. While Asselman mostly focuses on the tiles as flat ornamental elements, he’s also started using them in three-dimensional installations. The slightly iridescent black-and-dark-blue *Disturbance* wall sculpture was developed using combinations of metal, ceramic, and resin. The pieces become a single object, but each element is still discrete because of the unexpected material pairings. —AM

↓ **Disturbance Sculpture**



MEXICO CITY & MADRID, SPAIN /  
@KAUANI\_\_\_\_\_

## Kauani

Kauani’s lamps don’t just illuminate—they belong. Formed by textile designer Inés Quezada and Inés Llasera, the lighting studio takes its name from the Nahuatl word for “to flourish.” Working between Mexico City and Madrid, the team translates botanical forms into lamps. Their latest series, *Noches Áridas* (Arid Nights), draws from xerophytic flora like cacti, many of which photosynthesize at night to conserve water. “This is a way they survived,” Quezada says. “There was something very poetic in their relationship with light and night.” Kauani’s process combines custom knits and unusual materials to form the pieces’ soft yet structural bodies. Their Tuna lamp mimics the spiny, fleshy fruit of the prickly pear cactus, wrapped in ribbed 3D-knitted nylon and embroidered with black pom-poms. For both, these lamps are more than objects. “They are like *seres vivos*, like living beings, even if the light is on or the light is off,” Quezada says. —Anna Braz



“Narrative is always guiding form and color, although there comes a point where these two are so important that they express themselves almost autonomously.”

INÉS QUEZADA, KAUANI

I DO MY BEST WORK...

42%  
In the morning



29%  
In the afternoon



17%  
In the evening



12%  
Late at night



I WORK BEST WITH...



52%  
Music

35%  
Silence

13%  
Podcasts

ATHENS, GREECE / @MADEBYASTRONAUTS

Astronauts

Harnessing the industrial process of hydroforming—high-pressure fluids shaping ductile metal—the Athens, Greece, duo Astronauts (Danae Dasyra and Joe Bradford) craft otherworldly furnishings like the Hybris Astern chairs, a collaboration with Greek art and fashion studio Serapis that challenges

perceptions about what a chair should look like. “Our practice reflects on the experience of encounter,” as Dasyra describes it. “We aim to create moments of surprise—inviting people to find strange beauty in the atypical, to imagine new narratives about the origins and potential functions of our pieces.” The seemingly in-

flated metal forms that make up their furniture and objects seem to have come from another place and time. “Design offers a space where we can stretch the elasticity of our minds,” Dasyra continues. “It trains us to see the world as a layered collage of meaning and forms, inviting us to look beyond the surface.” —AM

“We aim to create moments of surprise—inviting people to find strange beauty in the atypical and to imagine new narratives.”

ASTRONAUTS



PHOTO: GEORGE NALBADIS



WARSAW, POLAND /  
@SZKLO.STUDIO

## Szko Studio

Aleksandra Zawistowska, of Szko Studio, was getting over a breakup when she found glasswork at Amsterdam's Sandberg Instituut. She wanted to immerse herself in an all-consuming art practice, and she found "therapy" in a glass workshop "where everything can burn you." Her freehand creations are wickedly elegant. Bowls and stemmed glasses are reimagined as chunky, misshapen forms, like drooping ice sculptures surrendering to heat. One of her favorites, an 18-pound vase that she made in 2022, took four days to complete; she primarily used stones to create its globular shape. It comprises layers of transparent glass that are "not as oxidized," she says, giving the piece its crystal-clear finish with every little bubble and texture preserved within. —JL

↑ Tulip Vase

NEW YORK CITY & LOS ANGELES /  
@JAMESCCHERRY

## James Cherry

Based in New York and Los Angeles, artist James Cherry explores lighting from a sculptural standpoint: turning found and upcycled elements into high design. "As I've gotten older, I think there is a real specificity that I appreciate about making lamps," Cherry says. "They wield an immense amount of control in the way they are viewed because they set the tone for how they are interpreted from every angle." Applying that thinking to his first hospitality project, Cherry recently helped stage and, of course, light his friend's new Manhattan restaurant, Ha's Snack Bar. "It's refreshing to make work that I know will be interacted with by a city of people," he says. "What does lighting for a first date look like, ideally?" —AM

➤ Montessori Panel Chandelier



### HOW DO YOU PROCRASTINATE?

I browse Sniffies, but I guess you could say I'm doing primary research ;) **Kevin Quale**

I'm completely addicted to online chess.

**Matt Pecina, Studio Guapo**

When I truly don't want to do anything—like really nothing at all—I play solitaire on my phone. That's peak procrastination for me. Actually, it's a specific version called Easthaven.

**Hannah Kuhlmann, Studio Kuhlmann**

### WHAT EVERYDAY OBJECT WOULD YOU LIKE TO REDESIGN AND WHY?

A toilet. I have never seen a toilet that I like. **Duyi Han**

Banknotes, because they are so serious and uninspiring. I think the design and colors could be vastly improved, but they could also have small, unique touches like jokes and wisdom to make us laugh, similar to fortune cookies. **Joe Bradford, Astronauts**

All touch screens should be responsive to long nails. **Aleksandra Zawistowska, Szko Studio**



NEW YORK CITY / @STUDIO.S.II

## Studio S II

New York City-based Studio S II creates objects, furnishings, and interiors inspired by both industrial mechanics and the human body. Its sculptural designs combine both rigid and soft components—such as structural steel bars and skin-like latex. Founders Erica Sellers and Jeremy Silberberg bring together these two seemingly opposed references in a visual and formal language. All of their projects are artistic and conceptual—communicating a narrative—but are also expertly fabricated. Made of cast epoxy resin and glass, the Solar Flare coffee table expresses the concept of sonification—creating sound from data. Its undulating form acts as a visual metaphor for this translation process. "I want art to be touched, and I love functionality and performance," Sellers says. "Design is my language for...crafting pieces and spaces that not only serve a purpose but also provoke, seduce, and disrupt." —AM

↑ Solar Flare Coffee Table



LA MARSA, TUNISIA /  
@A\_L\_T\_I\_N\_\_S\_T\_U\_D\_I\_O

### Altin

For Yasmine Sfar and Mehdi Kebaier, design is a balance. The couple work closely as Altin's cofounders from opposite sides of the table: Sfar is an interior designer at her father's atelier in Tunisia, and Kebaier is a civil engineer. "It's two different ways of seeing things," Sfar explains. "Mehdi might not have an idea for a piece at the start, but he's going to start thinking about how different materials can have a dialogue together." Tunisia's artisans traditionally use materials like oxidized metal and sea rush, and these textural accents play a central role in Altin's brand of minimalism, as seen in the Ganymede. A checkerboard of metal accents pops against the sea rushes that wrap the cabinet on all sides, feeling at once traditional and future forward. Sfar notes that people who passed through brought their cultures, their histories, and their own traditions: "There's a mosaic of so many techniques now, and it links to nature, the resources, the landscape." —NM

↳ Ganymede Cabinet



LIMA, PERU / @RFSTUDIOPERU

### RF Studio

It was Rafael Freyre's early encounters with nature—sketching various animals, plants, and landscapes—that led him to RF Studio, his interdisciplinary Lima-based practice. "I've always felt that the concept of design itself was very far from the experience of nature," Freyre says. "So from the beginning I wanted to rethink 'the interior' as the continuation of the landscape." Finding ways to reinterpret craft traditions rooted in parts of the world where Freyre designs interiors, RF Studio also creates limited-edition furnishings. The Mapa de Suelos series is inspired by the layered geology of the Andes and the Amazon. Monolithic tables, desks, and consoles are rendered in different types of stone. Marble, travertine, onyx, and other composites are layered together in recognizable forms, becoming maps of sorts in three dimensions. —AM

↑ Mapa de Suelos Table



### MY FAVORITE MATERIAL IS...

- 21% Wood
- 17% Stainless steel
- 13% Glass
- 8% Clay
- 4% Alpaca
- 4% Aluminum
- 4% Fabric
- 4% Soil
- 25% Something else

SURAT, INDIA / @OUTOFTHESHED\_

### Shed

Priyanka Shah remembers being "nostalgic for India" and "longing for much more" after graduating from New York's Parsons School of Design in 2014. She returned home to immerse herself in the artisanship she yearned for and founded Shed. Her team produces furniture, decor, and board games, but the most intricately executed projects are hand-cranked carousels. Shah blindly accepted a client commission to make one in 2021; she has since designed 45. "I didn't know how to work with gears, but there was no reason why we couldn't try," she says. She created the Library carousel as a client's gift for an avid reader. The dioramic scenes were imagined based on what Shah was told about the recipient, like how he reads while showering. The final piece showcases a winding staircase, hundreds of tiny books, and a miniature bathtub. —JL

→ Library Carousel





**“Dick as a motif was very helpful for me.”**

KEVIN QUALE

NEW YORK CITY / @KEVINQUALE

## Kevin Quale

Kevin Quale says half the people who visited his booth at the Alcovia design fair in Miami last year didn't immediately realize that the surrealist ceramic chandelier above them was covered in dicks. Though his work isn't subtle, the mash-up of 17th-century Delftware and gay iconography could be right at home in a Hamptons

colonial—if the owner doesn't mind penises hanging from the ceiling. The collection, which includes *tulipières* and candelabra, is the first for the 37-year-old, who by day is the lead lighting designer at Lindsey Adelman Studio. Recently, Quale got back in the studio and started making his own stuff again, drawing on

his background in ceramics to explore an idea he'd been thinking about for a long while. He never imagined, though, the diversity of people who'd be into it. "In my mind, my target audience is gay men, but I was really surprised by just how many people from all different corners really liked it."

—Alana Hope Levinson

● **WHO ARE YOUR HEROES (IN DESIGN, IN LIFE, IN BOTH)?**

Bijoy Jain, Junya Ishigami, Hayao Miyazaki, my mother. **Priyanka Shah, Shed**

My ultimate life heroes are my parents, without whom I wouldn't be speaking to Dwell today.

**Olorunfemi Adewuyi, Omi Collective**

Birds. **Hannah Kuhlmann, Studio Kuhlmann**

● **WHAT SKILL WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO LEARN?**

In design, I'd love to deepen my skills in working with metal, as it would open up more possibilities. Outside of design? I wish I could open my eyes underwater, especially in salt water.

**Eunji Jun, Wknd Lab**

I would like to learn how to use a chain saw. **Rafael Triboli**

To freeze time. **Yasmine Sfar, Altin**

● **WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?**

I think I'd be lying if I didn't say my phone? I mean I live on this stupid thing.

**James Cherry**

Half-joking, half-serious: a metal ear pick. My ears are tiny, and it's the only one that actually works. **Eunji Jun, Wknd Lab**

PHOTO: BRAD OGBONNA

“I consider the design of my work as design for emotional functions. I think an emotion-based approach is something very underexplored.”

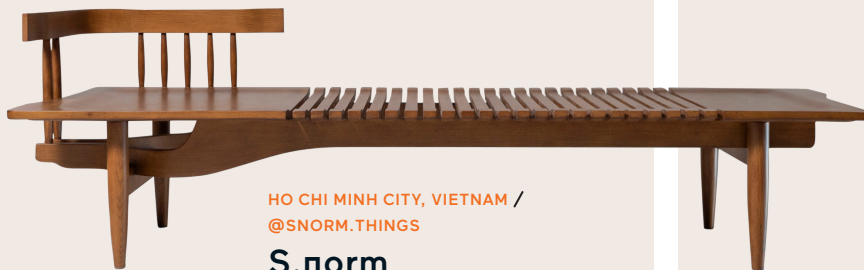
DUYI HAN



SHANGHAI, CHINA / @DUYI.HAN

## Duyi Han

Working across the globe, Chinese designer Duyi Han creates objects and environments as neuro-aesthetic prescriptions: all-encompassing experiences that allow the viewer to activate all of their senses. For example, the Ostorio table lamp is covered with bright-pink, semi-transparent fabric to express the fragility of religious devotional objects. "I'm able to bring different disciplines into one single project," he says. "My work also engages with elements of different cultures and styles and time periods." Developed as part of the Shakti Design Residency program, the Celestial Manual chandelier stems from Han's exploration of artisanal practices specific to India. "I was very touched by the intensity and scale of Indian craftsmanship, especially embroidery," he adds. Referencing traditional Indian wedding garments, the chandelier is made of a steel frame and draped fabric with a perforated motif. —AM



HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM /

@SNORM.THINGS

## S.norm

Although the furniture designed by S.norm is highly considered and crafted (think: echoes of midcentury modernism with a Vietnamese twist), cofounder and codesigner Tho Nhân Pham assures me that they're intended for everyday use. "When we talk about craftsmanship in Vietnam, we look deeply into the lifestyle of the people. We make things that normal people need," he says. Case in point: the Noon bed, a chaise-like bench with a cleverly slatted surface for air flow that's perfect for a daily midday nap. Curiously, S.norm, a five-person operation founded in 2022, is essentially a vibrant side hustle—Pham is a full-time architect who finds joy in creating pieces that could potentially live within the walls of his building projects. "Getting into the details is satisfying," he says. —JL

↑ Noon Bed

NEW YORK CITY & LONDON,  
ENGLAND / @HAWAALNAJJAR

## Hawa Al-Najjar

Hawa Al-Najjar views design as a less restrictive practice than architecture, the discipline in which she initially trained. The somewhat functional, somewhat artistic pursuit of furniture design allows her to bridge her training with the tactile satisfaction of creating something by hand. "As a woman designer that fabricates her own work, I represent a perspective that is still largely unrecognized in the industry," Al-Najjar says. Incorporating a skewed classical column hand-carved out of red cedar and an aluminum sheet shade, the Ironic Ionic lamp demonstrates how Al-Najjar riffs on historical cues and ensures that the finished design still reveals the physical process involved in its making. —AM

→ Ironic Ionic Lamp

CAIRO, EGYPT / @DONTANANI

## Don Tanani

At Don Tanani, good design has always been a family affair: Tamara El Tanani's parents have been importing foreign furniture to Egypt for decades. "I come from a family that's been working in design for the past thirty years," she says. The Egyptian designer founded the studio with her mother, Alia, in 2017 and with the support of Tamara's brother Omar. "My mother is the creative director—she pushes the boundaries," Tamara says. Together, they're tearing open the narrow frame of reference through which outsiders sometimes see their country. Their pieces use elements of contemporary Egyptian living while nodding to traditions, like using curved oxidized oak to mimic older ebony forms. One piece—the Hassir bench—was designed to sit beside the Pyramids, with woven reed screens that shield against the midday sun and allow a gentle breeze to pass through. As Tamara says, "Modernity doesn't need to look sleek and harsh." —NM

↶ Hassir Bench



### ● WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF AN ENCOUNTER WITH DESIGN?

Going to the *tianguis* [street markets] with my mom on Sunday mornings when I was a kid. I was fascinated by how they adapted so effortlessly—leaning on walls, tied to fences, anchored with stones. It was design in motion: improvised, practical, and deeply embedded in everyday life.  
Javier Guzmán Cervantes, Ex Soup

As kids, we used to make sports cars with folded paper. This was when I learned the power of improvisation and lateral thinking in design.  
Toluwalase Rufai, Salù Iwadi Studio

### ● WHAT CONTEMPORARY DESIGN TREND DO YOU DESPISE?

Nail design? Hahaha.  
Amine Asselman

Cluttercore.  
Jensin Okunishi

I really can't with all the wiggly furniture. Also very bored with furniture that weighs like 1,000 pounds.  
Matt Pecina, Studio Guapo

I don't have an emotional capacity for hatred. I just skip objects that don't make me feel anything.  
Aleksandra Zawistowska, Szkło Studio

I SKETCH WITH...

37%  
Pen



46%  
Pencil



17%  
Computer



I BELIEVE...

21%  
Less is more



12%  
More is more



67%  
Just enough is enough



SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA / @WKNDLAB.OFFICIAL

Wknd Lab

College-friends-turned-design-partners Eunji Jun and Halin Lee recall weekend video chats when they both studied abroad; they sipped wine and fantasized about the things they'd create together. They founded Wknd Lab—a studio practice focused on sustainable materials, traditional craftsmanship, and contemporary forms—after they returned to Seoul. “We consider ourselves in between design and art. We make functional art,” says Lee. The duo’s oeuvre includes stackable tiles made from oyster shells, floor lamps adorned with *norigae* tassels, and fresh takes on an ancient knot work called *maedeup*. The Beomjong light, inspired by the shape of a Korean Buddhist temple bell, is a copper wall lamp coated with gradient enamel using a decorative cloisonné technique. “We choose the material or technique first, then design a shape based on that,” says Jun of their process. “It allows us to explore so many different fields.” —JL

◀ Beomjong Light

NEW YORK CITY / @STUDIO.GUAPO

Studio Guapo

Looking to bridge the gap between street wear and furniture design, New York’s Matt Pecina often develops items out of found objects and construction material, under the moniker Studio Guapo. As demonstrated in designs like his “remix” of Enzo Mari’s Sedia 1 chairs, he champions an open-source, DIY approach: guidelines that allow anyone to assemble furnishings out of readily available materials. “I see myself as a design communicator above all else,” Pecina says. “I like to create things that feel familiar and inspire others to create themselves.” Whether directing a visual campaign for various brands or designing one-off furnishings, he adopts an experimental yet aesthetically attuned approach. The Guapo rocker was produced with organically cut planks of wood and assembled using simple bolts. His output is never overly expressive and plays on cultural cues: in this case, the type of countercultural visual language being used by fashion brands today. —AM

▶ Guapo Rocker V1



SOFIA, BULGARIA & PARIS, FRANCE / @GEORGIEVZABETA

Georgiev Zabeta

The Bulgaria-based Kiril Georgiev and France-based Elina Zabeta, the couple behind Georgiev Zabeta, thrive on what Georgiev calls an “irrational” design philosophy. Challenges abound in their multidisciplinary practice, but the breakthroughs can be revelatory. “We like creating stuff that when you see it again, you discover something new about it or it looks completely different,” Georgiev says. The Tylissos ceramic series, in particular, was an arduous miracle. To achieve the desired finish, Zabeta used a stone-ware clay on the wheel that blistered her hands. Georgiev’s “super difficult” glaze of glass silica, manganese, and other minerals could crack pieces or contaminate the kiln if applied incorrectly—but the slick finish astounded them. “Depending on the light, it can look almost black, brown, or transparent. Sometimes it’s bluish or a little green and purple,” he says. “This was the most exciting discovery.” —JL

↑ Vessel #8 Tylissos Series

PHOTOS: COURTESY COMPANIES AND DESIGNERS

ATLANTA / @JENSINOKUNISHISTUDIO

## Jensin Okunishi

Jensin Okunishi creates geometric compositions in hand-knotted rugs. In pieces like the Moon Pools rug, she introduces visual effects—like color gradients—to add the perception of three-dimensional depth. Though contemporary in design, the pieces are produced using historic

techniques specific to Nepal and Tibet. The textile designer views her work as a kind of balancing act, between self-expression and spatial cohesion. “I don’t design a lot of things that can easily blend in, but I think they can still be harmonious with other objects,” Okunishi says. A lot of her pro-

cess centers on the idea of free creative exploration. As a child, she learned to play the violin and performed at recitals, which required a level of conformity, following strict rules. “Design gives me permission to follow my curiosities without the fear of making mistakes along the way.” —AM



“I don’t design a lot of things that can easily blend in, but I think they can still be harmonious with other objects.”

JENSIN OKUNISHI

### WHAT’S IN YOUR DREAM HOUSE?

A sunlit home with a natural swimming pool, lotuses, aquatic plants, and little fish. A wide garden (preferably with no slugs!), and a cozy atmosphere that’s neither too modern nor too old. Inside, I’d love to have a piece from every artisan we’ve worked with, along with my mother’s paintings and my father’s ceramics.  
**Eunji Jun, Wknd Lab**

A fun slide.  
**Olorunfemi Adewuyi, Omi Collective**

Sun, sauna, pool.  
**Hannah Kuhlmann, Studio Kuhlmann**

### HOW CAN THE DESIGN WORLD BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

When it challenges your body. We need to reconnect and include all types of bodies.  
**Rafael Freyre, RF Studio**

There are SO many young outsiders that love design. I think the design world needs to just hand out more opportunities for the youth to get involved. Like why not collaborate with the student that won’t stop hanging out at your store? Let the kids film a music video in the showroom and everybody wins.  
**Matt Pecina, Studio Guapo**

The design world must first recognize that everything it produces is political—both in who gets commissions and how products are made. Every material choice is a political statement.  
**Hannah Kuhlmann, Studio Kuhlmann**