

# AN INTERIOR

A magazine by  
The Architect's  
Newspaper

Spring 2020



Autodesk Boston  
selgascano  
Quito Travelogue  
MAISON&OBJET  
PRODUCTORA's Roma House  
Vancouver Scene  
Collectible Design  
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# In This Issue

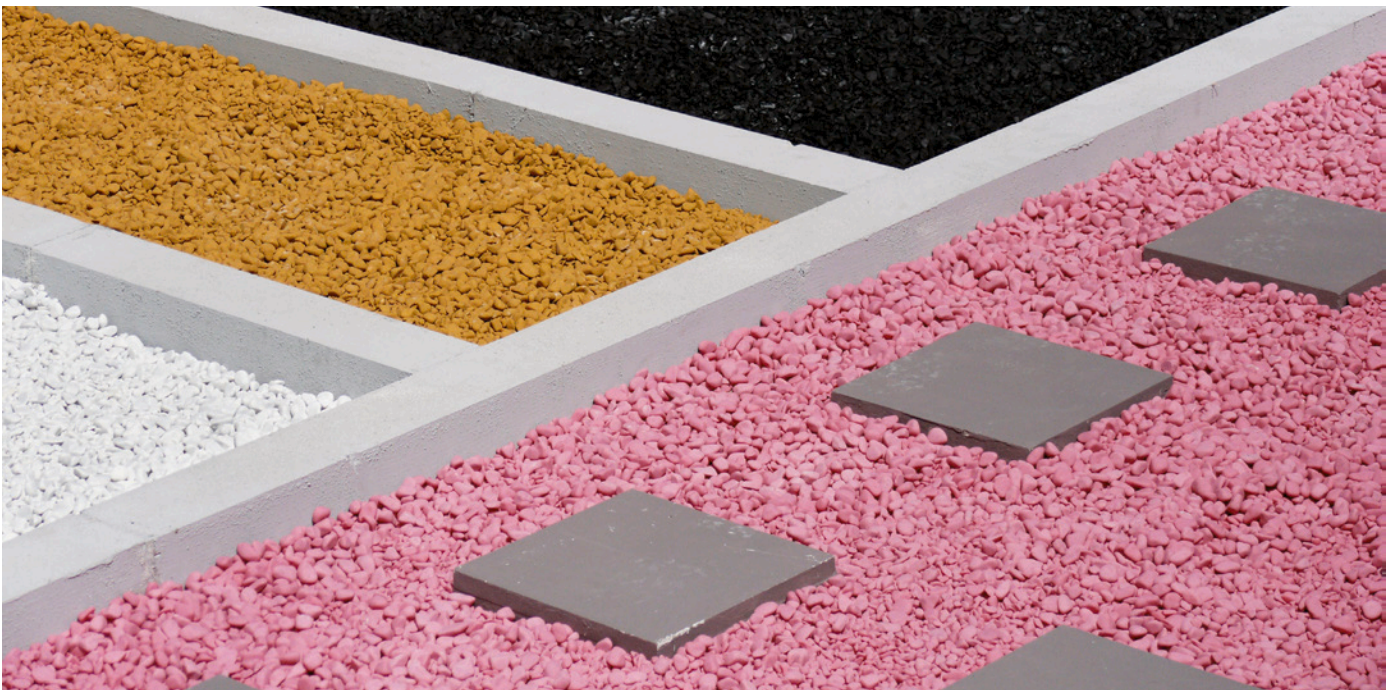
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Discover what today's leading architects choose when it comes to building materials. From wall panels with acoustic properties to wind-resistant aluminum shingles, their answers will surprise you.

Utile expands Autodesk's Boston office with a kaleidoscopic arcade.



Top: Courtesy Tom Dixon | Below: Benoît Fougeirol



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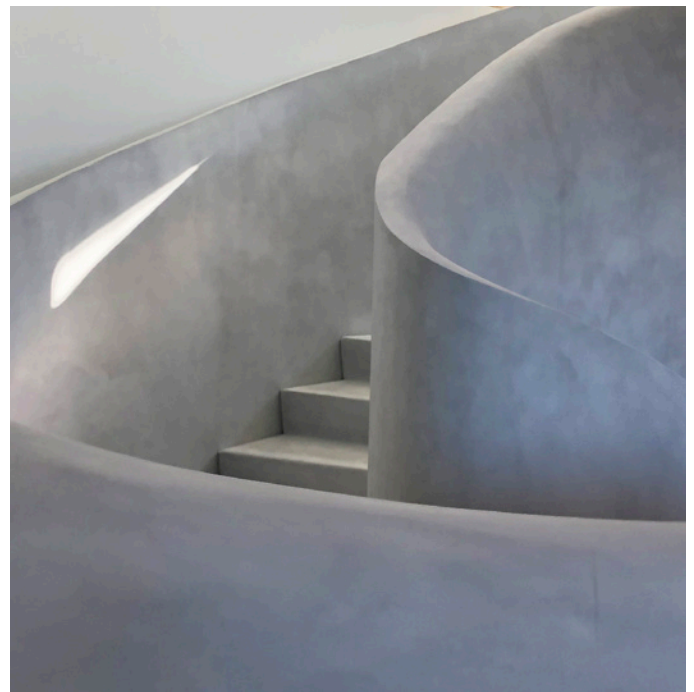
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**On the cover:** Autodesk Boston HQ by Utile (Chuck Choi)



# Editor's Note

## THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER'S FIRST ANNUAL DESIGN GALA

MARCH 2020

Since launching our online magazine a year ago, *AN Interior* has been awash in the best residential, retail, hospitality, workspace, and institutional projects interior architecture has to offer. With a growing readership and sharpened focus, we're poised to bring you an even better selection of projects in the coming year.

To mark the occasion and introduce the first annual *AN Design Gala*—an event that recognizes North American leaders in architecture, design, and construction—our March issue brings together everything *AN Interior* represents. Highlighting offices and homes in the U.S. from coast to coast and in Mexico, we come to terms with a split emerging between restrained minimalism and pastiche-driven maximalism, which is itself more refined than it has been in recent years. And yet a sense of playful satire and subtle experimentation seems to transcend the divide.

A clever interchange of color, form, and texture runs through Utile's expansion of Autodesk's Boston outpost (page 48) and Thoughtbarn's "crafted" HQ for Dallas-based artisanal home-ware brand The Citizenry (page 62). In Mexico City, PRODUCTURA cofounder Wonne Ickx gives us a tour of his long-anticipated Roma neighborhood home (page 56), while Independent Architecture principal Paul Andersen takes us to meet his Motherhouse in Denver (page 72).

In Quito, we discover one of South America's burgeoning creative capitals (page 10), and in Vancouver, we check in with some of Canada's hottest design talents (page 78). Two graphic installations, in Chicago (page 84) and New York (page 92), riff on midcentury modern austerity. A report on the state of the collectible design industry reveals how this niche market is changing (page 32).

Adrian Madlener

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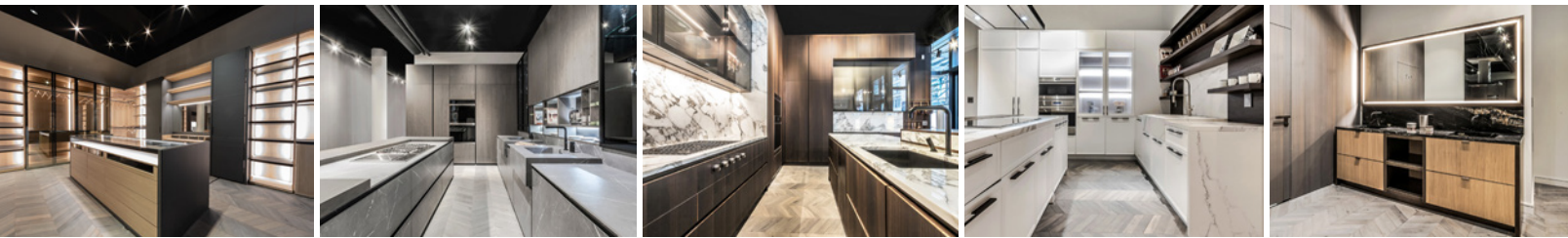
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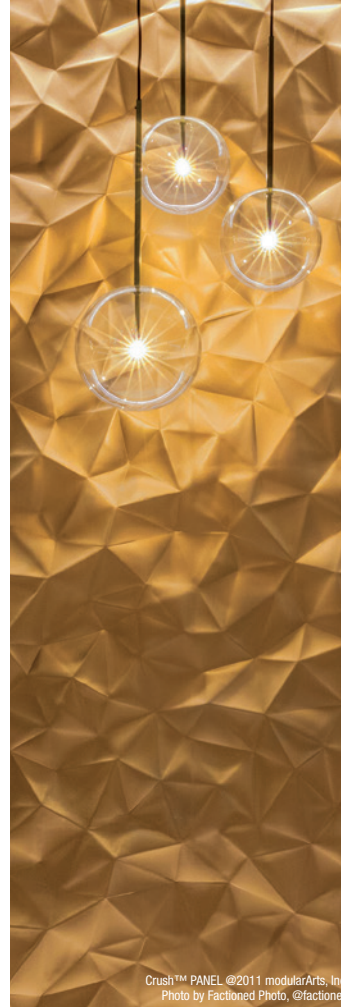
Issue 15 Spring 2020. AN Interior is published three times a year as part of The Architect's Newspaper (issn 1552-8081), which is published 12 times a year (monthly) by The Architect's Newspaper, LLC, 21 Murray St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10007. Presort-standard postage paid in New York, NY.

Postmaster, send address change to: 21 Murray St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10007. For subscriber service: call 212-966-0630. Fax 212-966-0633. \$3.95 a copy, \$39.00 one year, international \$160.00 one year, institutional \$149.00 one year. Entire contents copyright 2020 by The Architect's Newspaper, LLC. All rights reserved.

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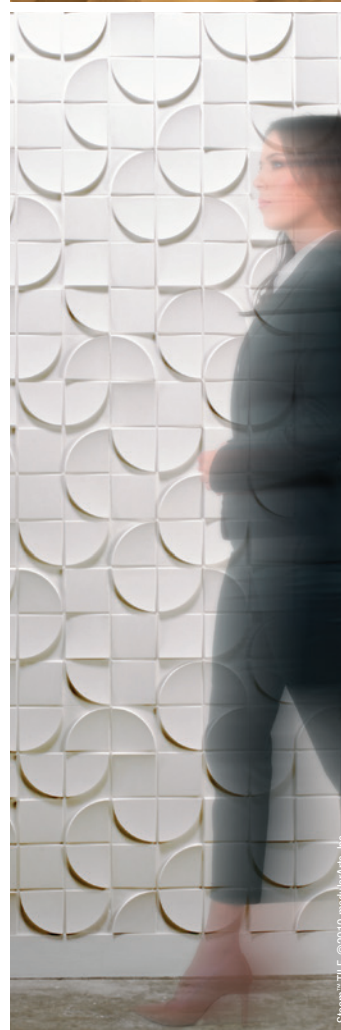
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# In the Know: Quito



Courtesy Casa Gangotena

The city of Quito, Ecuador, sits 9,300 feet high in the Andes, surrounded by active volcanoes and drenched in an even 12 hours of light per day. Because of its location on the equator, Quito experiences no seasons, and its altitude keeps it at a comfortable 50 to 77 degrees year-round. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the city is known for an architectural vernacular that includes the Baroque School of Quito, a collection of 16th and 17th-century Spanish colonial churches that incorporate indigenous imagery. The La Mariscal neighborhood boasts some great examples of Latin American modernism, and the city also caught the Brutalism bug in the 1960s and 1970s. A sophisticated food scene based on an abundance of fruits and vegetables marries traditional and avant-garde cuisines, while ecotourism includes trips to the nearby Galápagos Islands.

*By Matt Shaw*



## Teatro Politécnico

Designed by Ecuadorian architect Oswaldo de la Torre in 1965, this theater (top left) was one of Quito's first modern buildings. The interior is strongly functionalist, while its dramatic sculptural forms and aging concrete express a past vision of progressive culture.

Diego Ladrón de Guevara  
[epn.edu.ec/institucion/servicios-internos/teatro-politecnico/](http://epn.edu.ec/institucion/servicios-internos/teatro-politecnico/)

## Galería ECX

Architect and gallerist Mathieu de Genot epitomizes the chic that pervades Quito's design scene: "I am an architect, unapologetically classic in style, eclectic at heart, contemporary in art," his website states. A graduate of Columbia University GSAPP, he is the curator of Galería ECX (above left), a platform for art and design.

Paseo San Francisco  
 Cumbayá, Planta Baja  
[redecx.com](http://redecx.com)

## Olga Fisch Folklore

Olga Fisch, a Hungarian Bauhaus artist, started her eponymous brand in 1942 after settling in Ecuador in 1939. Blending modernist sensibilities and Ecuadorian folk culture, her rugs are in the collection of MoMA, but you can find her home goods (top right), clothing, bags, and other accessories in one of the brand's many stores in Quito.

Av. Cristóbal Colón E10-53  
[olgafisch.com](http://olgafisch.com)

## Somos restaurant

Executive Chef Alejandra Espinoza's menu comes in two parts: Ecuadorian specialties are featured on the "Ecuadorian Born" menu, and international fare reimaged with local ingredients can be found on the "Globally Inspired" menu. The open-concept kitchen and art-filled space give Somos (above right) a cool vibe.

N34-421 Av. Eloy Alfaro  
 y Av. Portugal  
[somos.rest](http://somos.rest)



Iwan Baan

Spanish practice selgascano finds joy in material economy, a critical skill at a time that could use a lot more of it. Though José Selgas and Lucía Cano founded the firm back in 1998, the studio is only now getting widespread recognition in the United States.

# In Conversation: selgascano



**Facing page:** Second Home, a co-working company, hired selgascano to design a space in the heart of Los Angeles. The result is a brightly colored field of pavilions surrounded by plantings. (See *The Architect's Newspaper*, September 2019.)

**Above:** José Selgas and Lucía Cano founded the Madrid-based firm in 1998.

Part of that is because the duo's first U.S. project, a Los Angeles outpost of the British co-working company Second Home, opened late last year—but it's also because the architecture world is finally catching up with the firm's tectonic explorations. Few contemporary offices have played so deftly and on such a large scale with color, flexible materials, and plant life. Projects that ten years ago may have been considered outré for substituting lightweight plastics for glass or incorporating hundreds of indoor seedlings now look prescient as designers search for new ways to leave lighter footprints. *AN* managing editor Jack Balderrama Morley spoke with Selgas about how the studio developed its approach.

*AN Interior:* How would you describe your firm's design philosophy?

**José Selgas:** We like to be open to every possibility in every project. We come with open eyes and with the possibility to go in any direction. We are architects, not artists. We always try to bring something to the table that is beyond our personal thoughts. All of our projects incorporate different inputs that come from different directions, but typically, they're always related to nature, climate, society, history, scale, and—more than anything—economy.

Economics are always fundamental. More and more, we have to deal with economics. When we look at how to produce a certain part of a project, we have to ask where it is, who's paying for it, how much it is, and how we're going to cover our costs. We avoid making expensive moves or choosing expensive treatments. The simplest solution is always best, but that doesn't mean we pick the stupidest one—it has to be the most appropriate option to achieve whatever idea we are trying to develop.

The lightest material is often the best solution for whatever problem we're faced with because less energy is needed to produce it, move it, transform it, and install it. We typically use ETFE plastic as an alternative to glass, for example, because transforming and installing glass is more expensive.

The dimensions and scales of most buildings right now are off. Everything is too big. We try to make spaces as small as possible. Why create a space that is 32 feet tall if that space can also function at 10 feet? Fifty or 70 years ago, houses and commercial spaces were smaller. Even cars were smaller in Spain.

*AN:* Why do you think everything has gotten bigger?

**JS:** I don't know, but we are conscious of the scale of things. The scale of things is fundamental in our architecture. We believe in going down, not going up, and in degrowth. Can certain elements disappear a little more? Can we give more space to nature? In whatever project we're building or working on, these questions are fundamental.





**Facing page:** The Plasencia Auditorium and Congress Center in Plasencia, Spain, features translucent plastic walls and a mix of orange and red tones.

**Above:** For an auditorium in Cartagena, Spain, Selgascano used polycarbonate as a wall material partly because a large polycarbonate factory was located nearby.

The problem that comes with this way of working is that you don't see anything. You just see nature or a garden. And some clients are kind of upset about that. They want to see what they are paying for.

A good project for us is one that incorporates as much nature as possible. When we talk about nature, we talk about a lot of different aspects, but in general adding greenery to a building makes it better.

For example, we just finished the Second Home project in Los Angeles. It is probably our most successful project in that sense because we planted 6,500 trees and plants within a space that used to be a parking lot. As you walk in, you don't feel that it is architecture. There's no building. You're just in the middle of a garden.

**AN:** Something else that gives your projects a richness is color. How did you decide to work with color the way that you do?

**JS:** We're often asked about our use of color or plastics. But in general, we don't really care about either. We actually use a lot of white and black. But color, for us, is very direct. It represents physics. In that sense, you need to use it. We never really decide on the right color until the end of a project. It's complicated because we're now getting more recognition, and there are some clients who call with



**Facing page, top:** The firm's exuberant 2015 Serpentine Pavilion was moved to Los Angeles in 2019.

**Facing page, bottom:** The firm also designed a location for Second Home in the Spitalfields area of London's East End, which used a range of tones, textures, and materials to create a flowing, ethereal space.

**Above:** The Second Home location in London's Holland Park features a covered atrium with an otherworldly ceiling.

special requests for color. I remember, for example, doing the Serpentine Pavilion and going forward with the idea of creating a little mall that could be completely transparent, but the curators were like, "What the hell is this? There's nothing." They were expecting something very colorful. For one reason or another, we moved in a different direction and the color came.

There has to be a reason for using a certain color. A project doesn't look good unless the right color is chosen. It's a challenge to test and select different colors. When a project is almost finished, you need to think, "Okay. Well, now, I need to paint the structure, because it's metal." Most people would just paint it white, black, or gray. White might be more visible. So, you need to have that in mind. There is always a reason. We often test out a lot of different colors to see which one can communicate the ideas behind the project best.

**AN:** How has working in L.A. influenced your practice?

**JS:** L.A.'s been a great school for us. It's more complicated in many ways than it used to be because of regulations. For example, the Second Home project was complicated because it is one of the first buildings in L.A. to use cross-laminated timber. We had to get a special permit. I think when Rudolph Schindler was practicing in the city, there was a lot more freedom. On the other hand, there are more materials, factories, and skilled people to work with in L.A. than back home in Europe. It's a trade-off.

**AN:** What sorts of materials are you experimenting with in Europe?

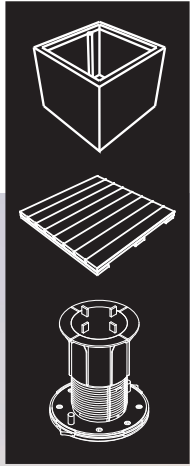
**JS:** Typically, we use the materials that are available in or around the places we develop projects.

We always try to ask the same question: What materials and factories can be found nearby? For the auditorium that we designed in Cartagena, Spain, polycarbonate was the best solution. The entire interior and facade of the building are covered in this material, but in different ways.

We think that the future will be all about using the biggest range of materials possible. We need to use everything that's available. We can't just use timber. There is no way that the planet will survive like that. The only way to survive is to use the least amount of material or no material at all.

If a building has good bones, there's no reason to knock it down. This is another way we work, and how we worked with the existing Paul Williams building for the Second Home Los Angeles project. I think that's one of the ways to move in the future—to be more sensible about what we have and how we implement the new, if we really need to or not.



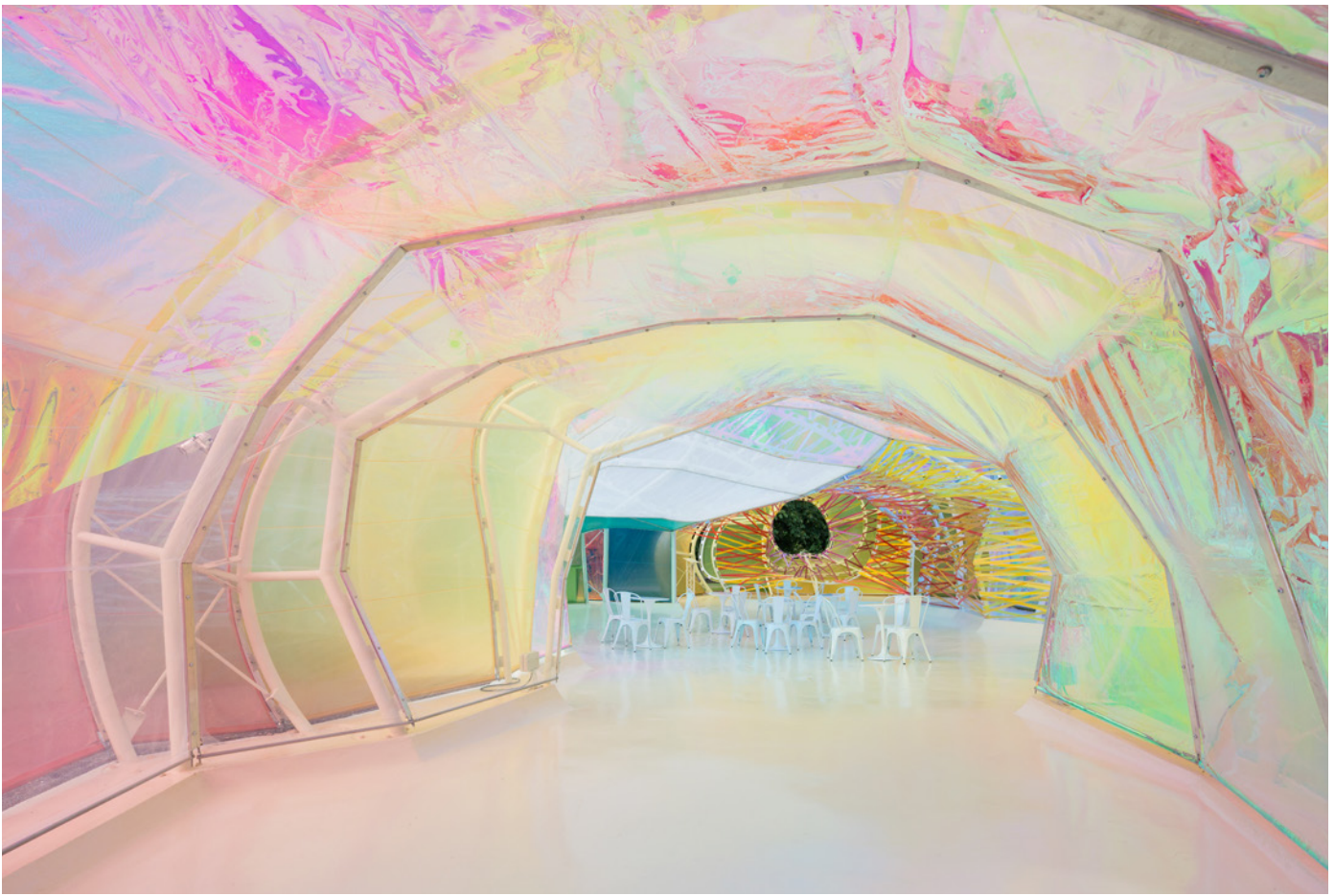


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# Tinseltown Turret

SOM's all-encompassing design of the Sunset La Cienega Hotel reconciles the duality of its surroundings. *By Adrian Madlener*



Benny Chan/Fotoworks



**Facing page:** The Sunset La Cienega Hotel's central courtyard is overhung by a 65-foot-tall installation by fiber artist Janet Echelman. *Dream Catcher* is a conceptual translation of the brain-wave activity that occurs during sleep.

**Above:** Set one level below Sunset Boulevard, the hotel's main lobby features a number of custom-built elements, including organic reception desks.

Set at the base of Hollywood Hills, the Sunset La Cienega Hotel cuts an imposing figure. The massing of two angular towers forms a barrier between the residential hills above and the city grid below. And yet, the hotel's strategically positioned courtyard serves as a crucial link between these contrasting urban conditions. Designed by the Los Angeles office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), the structure, with its rough, exposed concrete shell, pays homage to the grittiness of the Sunset Strip, while its refined interior conjures a far more serene atmosphere.

"The use of wood in handrails, balustrades, wall panels, custom-built organic reception desks, and other finishes helps define much of the hotel's public areas, including two restaurants, a private rooftop lounge, a lobby bar, a ballroom, and a cantilevered pool deck," SOM Associate Director Kevin Conway explained. "Adorned with large, sculptural silicone brass-tube luminaries, these spaces were designed to reflect a certain midcentury modern aesthetic specific to Los Angeles but also the strip's rock-and-roll heritage. For this project, it was really all about using humble materials in a detailed way."

Portions of the 388,000-square-foot property were designed to resemble an art collector's estate. "We wanted it to be like a big home with big openings that filter in natural light," Conway said. Paintings and sculptures permeate the complex while smaller objets d'art feature prominently in the hotel's 286 guest rooms. As if that weren't enough, most rooms feature floor-to-ceiling glass windows that frame scenic views.





**Facing page:** A number of sweeping, custom-built, sculptural silicone brass-tube luminaires help anchor the hotel's public spaces and evoke an art collector's home.

**Above:** The Sunset La Cienega Hotel includes two restaurants, a private rooftop lounge, a lobby bar, a ballroom, and a cantilevered pool deck.

A 65-foot-tall installation by fiber artist Janet Echelman hangs between the hotel's two towers. Cast in a spectrum of red and yellow hues, *Dream Catcher's* netting structure is a conceptual translation of the brainwave activity that occurs during sleep.

Below, an outdoor passageway connects Sunset Boulevard to a terraced amphitheater that overlooks the Los Angeles Basin. A grand outdoor staircase descends from street level to the lobby, where a mid-level landing connects to an east-west axis. "A vehicular ramp brings people down around the building and into the central space, what we call the Oculus," Conway added. "Even though the main lobby is set a story below the Sunset Strip, it's imbued with fresh air and ample exposures."

# Favor It!

In search of the latest product applications and building techniques, we asked leading interior architects to reveal their favorite materials. From wall panels with acoustic properties to wind-resistant aluminum shingles, their answers will inspire and delight. *By Gabrielle Golenda*

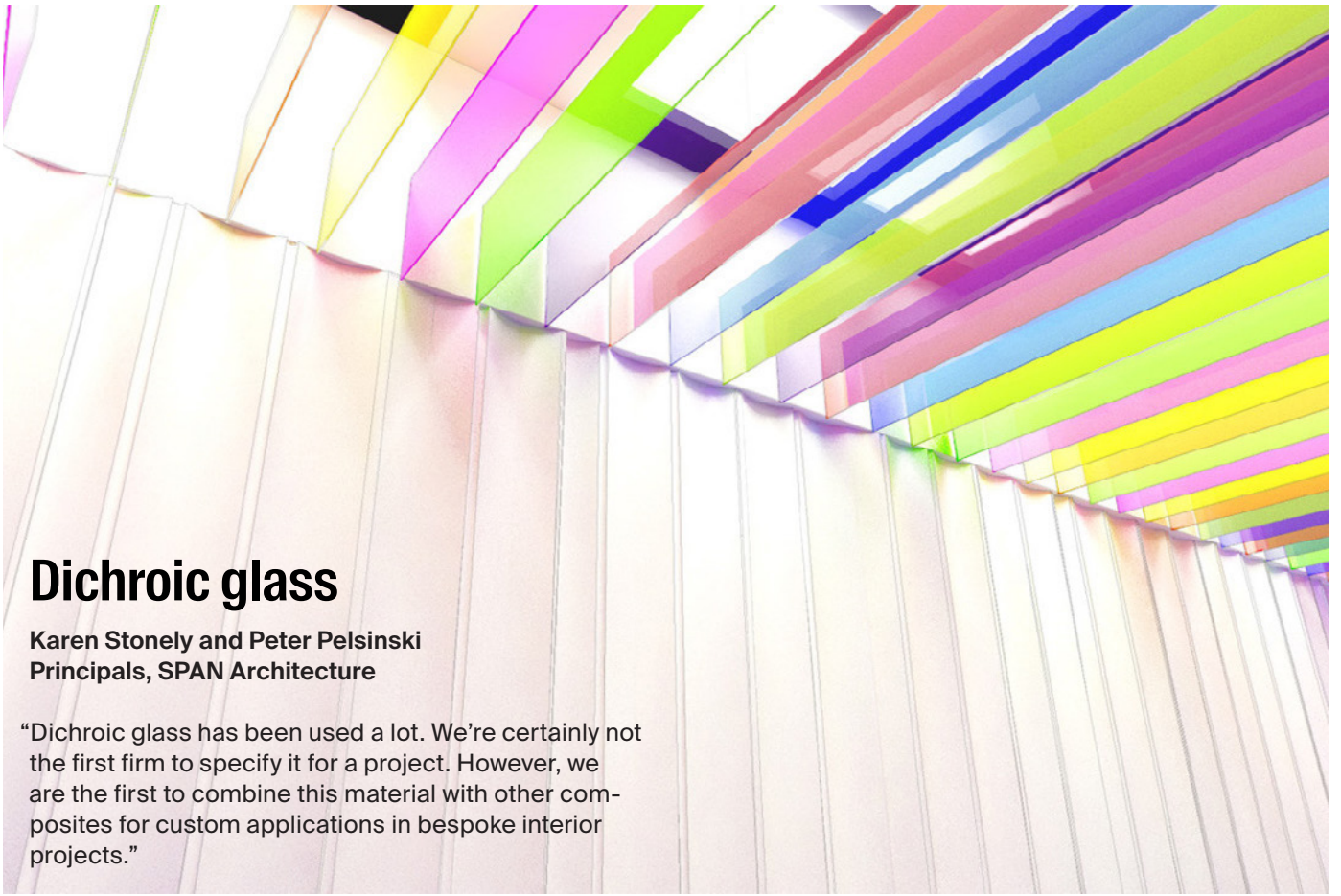
Courtesy Ensemble Studio

## Earth-formed concrete

Antón García-Abril and Débora Mesa  
Founders, Ensemble Studio

“Fluid concrete takes the form and materiality of the elements from which it is cast. We are captivated by the visceral expression (and imperfection!) of structures that use earth as formwork. Directly mixed in to inherit a rough texture or interposing thin textile layers that welcome smoothness, the material takes on an infinite number of variations. Architecture built with earth-formed concrete can acquire the qualities of landscapes and human bodies, connecting with our emotions.”





## Dichroic glass

**Karen Stonely and Peter Pelsinski**  
Principals, SPAN Architecture

“Dichroic glass has been used a lot. We’re certainly not the first firm to specify it for a project. However, we are the first to combine this material with other composites for custom applications in bespoke interior projects.”



## Clear twinwall polycarbonate panel by Polygal

**Rand Elliott**  
Founder and principal, Rand Elliot Architects

“The Polygal clear twinwall polycarbonate panel provides a great solution for handrails and guardrails. The product is sturdy and was the clear option for our design of the Donald Betz STEM Research and Learning Center at the University of Central Oklahoma. The combined panels create a wonderful moiré effect and reflection.”

# Trov light fixture by Ecosense Lighting

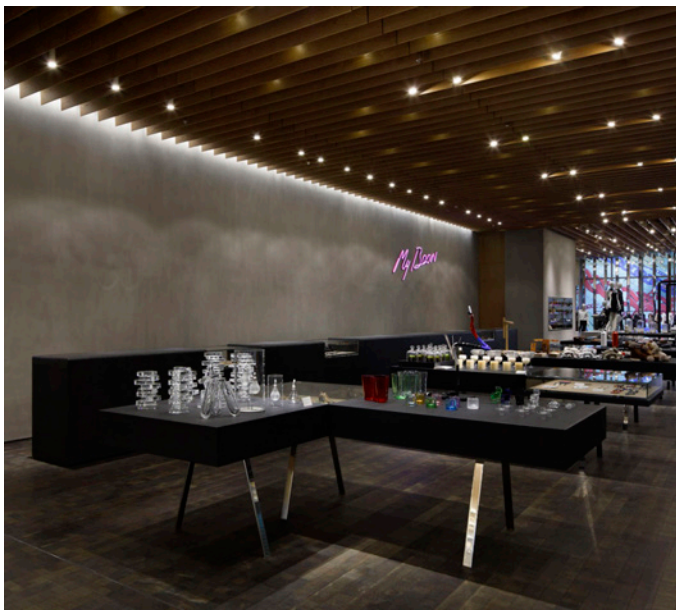
Nathan Rich  
Cofounder, Peterson Rich Office

“In addition to delivering energy efficiency and emitting high-quality light, these LED fixtures are easy to install and replace. We’re very fond of using indirect lighting to emphasize form. The Ecosense fixtures can be

daisy-chained within cove pockets and have local rather than remote drivers. If a fixture goes out, it can simply be unplugged and interchanged.”



Above: Eric Petschek | Below: Courtesy Jaklitsch / Gardner Architects



# EcoTop paper surface by KlipTech

Stephan Jaklitsch and Mark Gardner  
Principals, Jaklitsch / Gardner Architects

“We love how adaptable this biocomposite paper product is and employed the material when fabricating custom-designed tables for My Boon in Seoul. You can cut it like wood. Its fully saturated color gives the product a monolithic look. The FSC-certified fiber, which is 50 percent bamboo and 50 percent post-consumer recycled paper, is regionally extracted and contains no urea or formaldehyde. The EcoTop paper surface is color-stable and flexible. It is scratch and stain resistant. We love the idea of making furniture or counters out of paper. We believe our mission is to produce thoughtful designs using sustainable and durable materials.”



## ARTWORK by ORNAMENTA

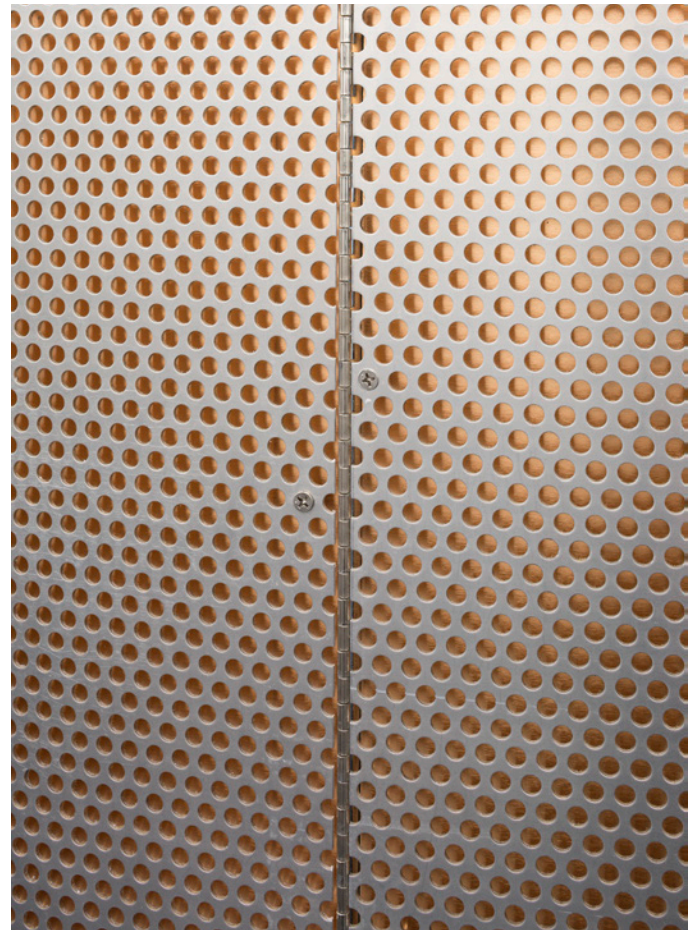
Jennifer Bonner  
Founder, MALL

“When searching for contemporary materials that speak to the traditions of faux finishing, we fell in love with ORNAMENTA’s ARTWORK collection. Inspired by Pop Art, these porcelain ceramic tiles include a series of brightly colored patterns that imitate the veining found in Italian marble. Graphic and daring, this composite was the perfect option for the interior of the Haus Gables project. Our goal was to make the interior of the house feel like you are stepping into an architectural drawing. We selected magenta and ash gray variants for the bathrooms and alternated their placement in section.”

## Perforated aluminum by McNICHOLS

Adam Snow Frampton  
Principal, Only If Architecture

“With round and staggered openings, perforated metal is an industrial material that we’ve used in a number of interior projects. We’ve applied it to shelving, drains, stairs, and radiator covers, and as wall and door cladding. With its transparency, the material works well with other elements and helps create depth. We like its graphic quality and the optical effect it produces when layered.”





## Concrete block by Basaltex

Florian Idenburg  
Founding Principal, SO - IL

“We developed this block and wall system with Mexican company Basaltex for a social housing project in León, Mexico. Precast panels proved too expensive because of the required equipment for installation. This product

weighs 35 pounds, which is the maximum acceptable weight one laborer can carry. We designed four unique variations to work within the curvilinear geometry of the facade.”



## Acoustic panels by Kirei

James Slade  
Founding Principal, Slade Architecture

“These panels are a fantastic alternative to MDF or metal when structural rigidity is not required. Kirei offers so much flexibility in patterning, texture, and color. The brand’s acoustic panels are also easy to handle. We recently specified them for a retail project in Nashville to create a lightweight, open ceiling that visually conceals all of the infrastructural elements running above.”

Above: Courtesy SO - IL | Below: Courtesy Slade Architecture

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# Durat

Catherine Johnson and Rebecca Rudolph  
Founders, Design, Bitches

“Color is important to our work, and we get excited when we find a product that is available in custom colors and includes recycled materials. Durat is a highly durable solid surface that includes postindustrial plastic waste

and is 100 percent recyclable. We have used it to strong visual effect in custom schemes developed in tandem with our client’s brand identities and in environments that require tough chemical and stain resistance.”



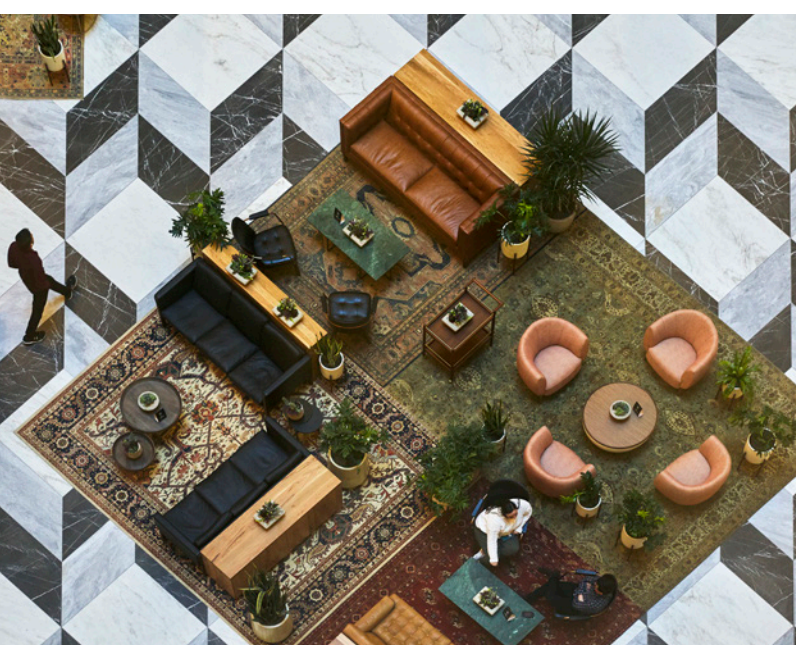
Above: Counter Culture | Below: John Horner



## Ironspot brick by Cloud Ceramics

Arthur Chang  
Principal, NADAAA

“Our office has had a long relationship with brick because of its history as humankind’s oldest and most versatile building material. Our most recent use of this material was at the newly completed Rhode Island School of Design North Hall project. Brick and slate buildings fit into their surroundings but also stand out with subtle iridescence and color variation.”



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Architect: SHoP Architects

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# Desire, Acquire

*AN Interior* examines the state of the U.S. collectible design market through four diverse perspectives.

Over the past two decades, a new type of design has taken shape. The contemporary collectible design market has combined the vintage market's tradition of connoisseurship and the art world's commercial structure with the experimental fervor of the early post-modern and studio craft movements. A select group of galleries, fairs, and museums and a growing collector base have tapped into the potential of collectible design, initially as an extension of fine art but increasingly as a domain that stands on its own.

Unlike standard product design, this type of output is characterized by artistic expression and limited production. Mass appeal and salability are not as important. Rather, individual designers are given free rein to conceive new one-off pieces that express their own personalities and outlooks. Often their works push the boundaries of material, form, function, and aesthetics.







Daniel Kukla/Courtesy Friedman Benda and Daniel Arsham

During the 2019 edition of the Design Miami fair, New York's Friedman Benda gallery teamed up with renowned artist, architect, and fashion designer Daniel Arsham on a fully immersive installation modeled after his Long Island home. Furnished with a number of personal artifacts, the self-referential staging also included reinterpreted design classics embroidered with personal annotations.



Douglas Friedman

Major bicoastal gallery The Future Perfect is known for displaying works by its wide roster of American and international talents in a series of staged homes. These iconic properties include a West Village townhouse in New York, a modernist home high up in the Hollywood Hills once owned by Elvis Presley, and a recently opened Beverly Hills estate designed by Raul F. Garduno in 1971 (above).

As contemporary collectible design becomes more established, it's gaining wider cultural influence. This transformation has brought with it a whole host of new complexities, both advantageous and challenging. To paint a full picture, *AN Interior's* editor Adrian Madlener spoke to four industry experts.

"A lot has changed in the past two decades," Friedman Benda gallery associate director Alex Gilbert said. "There's been more of a crossover. Artists are conceiving design and designers are being formally recognized by the art world, which reinvigorates itself by dabbling in design. Both sectors are expanding and so one can conjecture that the two would converge at some point."

"There's no question that the collectible design market is modeled on the art market," historian, journalist, educator, and adviser Daniella Ohad said. "What changed in the past two decades is that art collectors realized that they could

have the best paintings, but if they didn't have furniture to complement them, their homes would be impersonal."

"Most design collectors are also art collectors," Gilbert added. "However, the notion of buying for investment is still not quite as present in the design market. A majority of what is acquired is still based on necessity. Whereas it would seem normal for an art collector to amass paintings, it wouldn't make sense for a design collector to buy three coffee tables if they only needed one."

"The market emerged out of the auction houses," Ohad said. "In the early 2000s, Phillips dedicated some of its decorative arts programming to renowned designers like Ron Arad and Marc Newson. With the economic crash of 2008, the market shifted to independent galleries and the annual fairs that began to bring them together. But before that, there was a strong emphasis on vintage or secondhand design and in particular



As something of an enfant terrible in the New York design scene, Katie Stout is known for creating raw sculptural works that blend a primitive, slightly kitsch approach with a sense of narrative and reference. Though artistic in nature, her pieces still translate into functional objects. Stout's highly sought-after wares are sold by both Miami's Nina Johnson Gallery (above) and New York's R & Company gallery.

midcentury modern pieces, which weren't available for very long due to a limited supply. The market needed to search for work elsewhere and began focusing on living talents who were creating contemporary work."

"The vintage decorative art market was always thought of as a stepchild to the fine arts," midcentury modern design expert, dealer, and curator Mark McDonald said. "And yet, what we dealt with was the concept of rarity. Our strength was the ability to go to different parts of the world and do the legwork, to source pieces by historic makers that in some cases collectors didn't know existed. There was a certain glamour associated with visiting different cities in the world to uncover hidden gems."

"Back in the early 2000s, New York still had streets dedicated to galleries selling midcentury furniture," writer and former *Modern Magazine* editor in chief Beth Dunlop said. "Because of the emergence of the internet and online sales platforms like 1stdibs, but also because many of the dealers retired, most closed in that time. With the 2008 economic crash and the emergence of the Brooklyn makers movement, the market shifted almost entirely to young independent designers who relied on galleries to get started rather than larger brands."

"Being able to work with living designers

in the past two decades has created a different type of market," Gilbert said. "As gallerists, we are first and foremost representatives, and at times partners. However, we also invest time, money, and knowledge—technical assistance—to help our talents in their ventures and make sure their visions come to fruition. Many of these initiatives are years in the making and without some sort of armature, they would be a lot harder to realize. Our support extends to production, publishing, logistics, and curatorial introductions, as well as educational and residency opportunities."

"It's a lot easier to deal with things that are being made now, that you can control in terms of production and special commissions, and to work with people who are alive. The concept of rarity, supply and demand, can also be manipulated now," McDonald said. "The playing field has been leveled. Nobody sees anything strange about placing a 1930s Art Deco desk next to a piece by contemporary designer Katie Stout."

"It's so interesting how rapidly the world of people who appreciate collectible design has grown, but it's not just collectors, because there isn't that much out there to be collected," Dunlop said. "If there were only 40 important painters in the world, there wouldn't be any art collections. There are only a few dozen



*Brass Bench* by German designer Valentin Loellmann (above) featured prominently during his fall 2019 solo show at New York-based Twenty First Gallery, mounted in partnership with Paris-based Galerie Gosserez. Loellmann's highly ornate pieces combine reinterpreted artisanal techniques with contemporary forms and are composed using cooper, cast bronze, marble, and rare woods.

talents working this way. However, a wider culture has been created around this type of design.”

“The culture has changed in the way that media and social media have played up the 15 minutes of fame trope,” McDonald said. “Young talents with over 25,000 Instagram likes think that they will be the ones who are going to be written about, and in 50 years they will be—those were the things that were groundbreaking. As historians working in vintage, such sources are important to us, and so it seems bizarre to us how this scholarship is being watered down for future generations. Collectors have also gotten less rigorous in terms of research and rely on the media to guide their choices.”

“I sometimes worry that design’s going the way of art,” Dunlop said. “It feels like there’s a fear that a chasm is growing between the worlds of collectible design and everyday design. At the same time, collectible design is able to bring up the value of design and help support young talents pushing new ideas.”

“What design is being asked to do today is more complicated, more difficult, than the purely aesthetic, technically

evolutionary, or craftsmanship-oriented questions that drove connoisseurship in the past,” Gilbert said. “Design that is about self-expression or commenting on the world is something new and something people are interested in supporting. Design Miami is a major arbiter of this movement. Collectors are increasingly aware of this quality, as are major institutions. Museums have become more ambitious in terms of acquiring larger and thought-provoking works. It’s no longer about the isolated object.”

“I always advise my clients to buy work that is going to have historic value in the future,” Ohad said. “By that I mean works that are not only innovative or trendy at the time but that are going to last as statement pieces. When people look back at our time in 50 years, they can cite these objects as having had a major impact on design. The term collectible design is thrown around a lot. It should only be used to describe work that we can foresee as keeping and increasing in value over time. The challenge is finding pieces that have perspective and that are truly original.”

# Textured Tones

A deluge of colors intertwine  
in the latest textiles.

*Photography by Kendall Mills  
Art Direction by Ian Thomas  
Production by Gabrielle Golenda*

Whimsical periwinkle is just one of the opulent colorways in the Score collection by Wolf-Gordon (background). Meanwhile, textiles by Chilwich (foreground) resemble Japanese tatami mats. The thickness of the weave accentuates the bicolor threading.

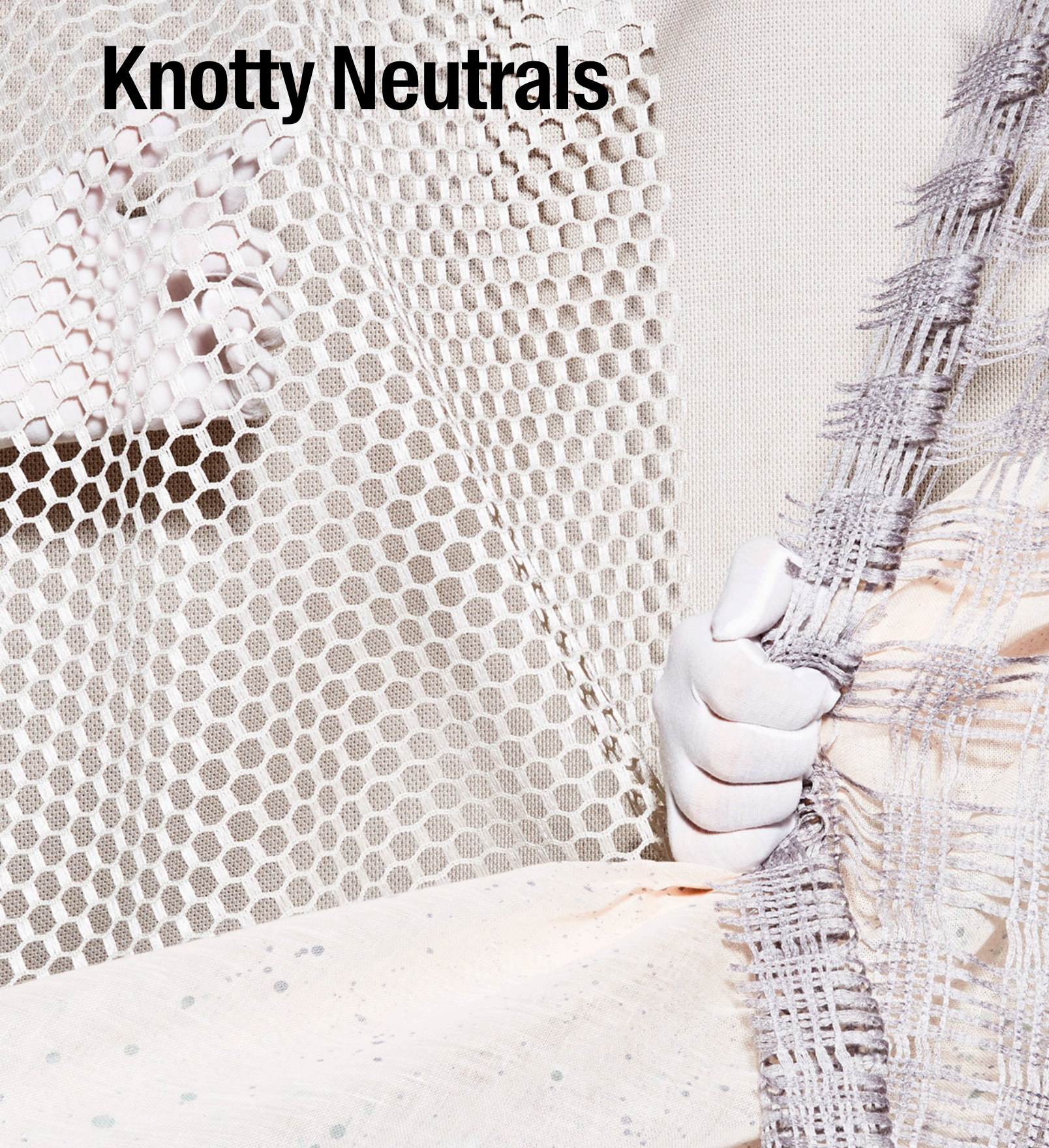
# Hued Hides



These leather textiles are colored using a special dyeing process that penetrates throughout the thickness of the skin. This new process affords warmer shades and cooler tones to accentuate the natural grain of the hide. Maharam's Brush collection (background) is characterized

by its baby-blue matte finish. Poltrona Frau's SC collection (foreground) features deeply saturated red, pink, and beige shades.

# Knotty Neutrals



Loosely defining space with tactile borders, these screen fabrics absorb sound and diffuse light in mute colors.

**Clockwise from top to left:** Carnegie's Globe sheers resemble honeycombs. Aptly dubbed for its natural linen color, the Essential Flax collection by Sunbrella features

fibrous weaves. Luum's Dispersion textile diffuses light and divides spaces with its translucent massing of threads. Speckle by Cope features a playful composition of Jackson Pollock-esque splashes of paint.

# Vintage Varieties

You may feel your animal instincts come out when you feast your eyes on this season's prints. New fierce motifs mix and match reinterpreted vintage patterns. These eclectic designs play off of each other in wildly pleasing combinations.

**Clockwise from top left:**

Woven by a machine, Richmond Park Velvet by Style Library Contract recalls William Morris's historic 1860s flora and fauna block-printed and handspun textiles.

Florescence is a spin on the classic camouflage pattern. In this rendition, Knoll-Textiles devised a more abstract design in a bright color palette.

Edward Red by Sunbrella features a classic Scottish tartan motif in deep crimson and mauve.

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus, Designtex developed a geometric pattern called Circle Jacquard.







# Midnight Mesh



Woven in a lattice of threads, this mesh fabric from Knoll-Textiles' KT Collection suggests the texture of a sports jersey but is designed to withstand wear and tear.

# Trend Report

***AN Interior* crossed the pond to catch up on European trends in furniture, lighting, textiles, and home accessories at MAISON&OBJET and the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair. Rising talents revealed fresh takes on modular furniture, product lifecycles, and curvilinear design. Established brands reinterpreted ideas from art history through the lens of sustainability—Tarkett’s readymade-inspired installation, shown here, was made of a new flooring that can be continuously recycled.** *By Gabrielle Golenda*

Courtesy Tarkett

NB-TKT-SFF2020-5100

# From Paris with Love

Biannual trade show MAISON&OBJET returned to the outskirts of Paris for its 25th anniversary edition to present the latest home accessories, furniture, and smart home technologies. From January 17 to 21, the fair showcased work by emerging designers, tried-and-true manufacturers, and established talents. The event also coincided with product launches in the city center.



**Mobile Chandeliers**  
Michael Anastassiades

Awarded MAISON&OBJET Designer of the Year, British Cypriot designer Michael Anastassiades dazzled the fair with his new luminaires that are somewhere between lighting and sculpture. Inspired by artist Alexander Calder, the 13 illuminated fixtures play with ideas of equilibrium and counterbalance.

[michaelanastassiades.com](http://michaelanastassiades.com)



**SWIRL**  
Tom Dixon

British designer Tom Dixon debuted the SWIRL vase collection in an ambitious one-day showcase entitled *24 Hours in Paris*. In some of the city's most stylish haunts, including the Palais de Tokyo and new restaurant Shabour, the pigmented, cylindrical, and postmodern-inspired vessels were displayed with ikebana arrangements created by celebrated florist Debeaulieu.

[tomdixon.net](http://tomdixon.net)

Left: Anne-Emmanuelle Thion | Right: Courtesy Tom Dixon



**Adrien Garcia**

Nominated by acclaimed interior architect Pierre Yovanovitch for the MAISON&OBJET Rising Talent Awards, Adrien Garcia was one of six finalists selected for their ability to champion craftsmanship over mass production. Debuting his first collection under the name Studio Adret, the young designer presented a modular furniture system encased in a monolithic, coral-hued cuboid unit.

[studioadret.com](http://studioadret.com)

**Asmara  
Ligne Roset**

Historic French furniture brand Ligne Roset celebrated its 100th anniversary by reissuing the 1967 Asmara sofa, designed by then-26-year-old Bernard Govin. Inspired by Verner Panton's psychedelic space-age interiors, the modular design is composed of fabric-upholstered foam polyurethane sectionals. The curvaceous components fit together like puzzle pieces.

[ligne-roset.com](http://ligne-roset.com)



**The Jazz Age collection  
Cogolin**

Emulating the architectural motifs of the 1920s, Cogolin's Art Deco-themed collection called The Jazz Age features bold graphic patterns that are woven on 19th-century Jacquard looms. Its six cotton, jute, and wool rugs are named after Manhattan neighborhoods that contain strong examples of this period style.

[manufacturecogolin.com](http://manufacturecogolin.com)



**Beluga Wall Lamp  
Eno Studio**

Inspired by contours of a type of whale's head, French lighting company Eno Studio dubbed this bulbous fixture the Beluga. The wall lamp's light-emitting glass globe appears to float over its burnished brass base, available in both gold and silver.

[enostudio.fr](http://enostudio.fr)



**Natural Bond**  
Tarkett

The *Natural Bond* installation combined Surrealist elements with nods to the cradle-to-cradle doctrine: Its Duchampian readymade sculptures have closed-loop product life cycles. Stacked geometric shapes were strapped together with nylon and swathed in the French multinational's vinyl flooring product iQ, which can be recycled continuously.

[tarkett.com](http://tarkett.com)



**The Archive**

An installation staged in Stockholm's Old National Archives, built in 1890, *The Archive* displayed design brands from Japan and Scandinavia that share similar aesthetics. Curated by Hanna Nova Beatrice, the group show presented designs produced by Ariake, Arita, LE KLINT, and Friends & Founders.

[ariakecollection.com](http://ariakecollection.com)  
[aritaporcelainlab.com](http://aritaporcelainlab.com)  
[friendsfounders.com](http://friendsfounders.com)  
[leklint.com](http://leklint.com)

Above: Courtesy Tarkett | Below: Andy Liffner

# Stockholm Style

From February 4 through 9, the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair returned for its 70th edition. As part of Stockholm Design Week, this premier event for Scandinavian design showcased furniture and lighting in bespoke displays within exhibition booths, showrooms, galleries, and installations throughout the city.



**The Sculptor's Residence**  
Norm Architects

Norm Architects outfitted *The Sculptor's Residence* with furniture by MENU, beds and mattresses by DUX, electronics by Bang & Olufsen, and objets d'art by a number of International brands. The simple shapes and natural materials play off of the home's architectural details to grand effect.

[thesculptorsresidence.com](http://thesculptorsresidence.com)



**Duna 02 Eco**  
Arper

Barcelona-based design studio Lievore Altherr Molina utilized recycled materials to mold the shell of the Duna 02 Eco chair for Italian brand Arper. The revitalized form of the 23-year-old design features a chassis made from 80 percent postindustrial plastic.

[arper.com](http://arper.com)



**Powder Vase**  
Hem

Designed by Swedish industrial designer Jenny Nordberg, this limited collection of vases for furniture brand Hem features folded sheet-steel forms with vivid surface treatments. The Powder Vase series was presented at the debut of the company's new Stockholm HQ, which was developed by Atelier Paul Vaugoyeau and Hem's internal design studio.

[us.hem.com](http://us.hem.com)

**Vestre**  
Note Design Studio

Norwegian outdoor furniture brand Vestre called on Swedish practice Note Design Studio to create an installation that highlighted the reusable materials in its latest collection by tracking the carbon footprint of every product on display. The showcase incorporated uncemented bricks, uncut sheets of plywood, and stone chips.

[vestre.com](http://vestre.com)







# Halls of Perception

Utile expands Autodesk's Boston HQ with a kaleidoscopic arcade. *By Siska Lyssens*

Chuck Choi



Chuck Choi

**Previous spread:** Light-permeable collaboration pods line a central arched walkway.

**Above:** The arcade of illuminated arches creates an uninterrupted visual connection through the office.

From the use of AI in the design of eco-friendly chairs to visualizing data and pushing the limits of parametric architecture, Autodesk is an industry leader in the development of 3D design, engineering, and entertainment software. Designing the California-based company's latest office would be a dream project for many practices.

The Boston-based architecture firm Utile was tapped to do just that—not once but twice. When Autodesk's South Boston Meeting and Event Center (MEC), completed by Utile in 2018, was in need of an expansion, the company called on the self-described research-oriented think tank again.

"Utile gained Autodesk's trust during the design of the adjacent MEC," Utile associate architect and project lead Ingrid Bengtson explained. "We were given a lot of creative freedom." The former U.S. army storehouse that was chosen for the extension was already imbued with natural light and floor-through views. The firm highlighted these attributes by introducing a variety of flexible working and meeting spaces. "Our brief was that the space should have a wow factor," Bengtson added.

With open-plan layouts no longer the holy grail in office design, Utile embraced the building's large columns. "We had to be very efficient with the

distribution of furniture so that the space could incorporate all aspects of the desired program," Bengtson said. "We were careful not to create an unyielding and uninviting sea of desks."

The firm exploited small gaps in the workstation layout to position a series of intimate tentlike rooms. Sectioned off by custom millwork, these pods form an archipelago amid the desk areas. Also breaking up the full-floor workspace is a central enclosure termed the "Glowing Box." Its enfiladed rooms-within-rooms are clad in a aluminum honeycomb core, a polycarbonate skin that is tinted in a 34-color gradient. This visual effect changes as employees move through the space.

The play with perception continues along the axis that connects the entire length of the storehouse. Composed as a kaleidoscopic arcade of illuminated arches, this central element extends the perceived depth of the space through forced perspective while also containing a number of small lounges. "Standing in the empty shell space at the beginning of the project, we were impressed by the expansiveness of the industrial hypostyle hall," Bengtson said. "Maintaining a 100-yard view seemed like a great way to highlight the history of the building."



Chuck Choi

**Above:** A luminous bar of enclosed rooms, the “Glowing Box” floats between the column grid.

**Facing page:** Within the column grid, Utile created an archipelago of architectural elements amid an open plan sea of desks.





**Above:** A waiting room for guests on the east side of the expansion, bounded by a bespoke porous metal screen that allows light through.

**Facing page, top:** A hovering folded PET felt baffle and long breakout table define an area of relief within the largest block of desks.

**Facing page, bottom:** One of the enclosed rooms within the Glowing Box.



PRODUCTORA redesigns a calm row house in Roma, Mexico City. *By Matthew*

*Messner*

# Casa Verde





Onnis Luque



**Previous page:** Much of the house takes a cue from the existing black and green tile floor of the living room. A chestnut leather couch by Pirwi and a clear wood table by Metropolitana, along with other new and vintage furniture, create a quiet family sitting area.

**This page:** Throughout the home, custom built-in shelving and cabinetry is clad in green Formica, continuing the color theme. These built-ins maximize storage in the small footprint of the project without causing undue clutter.

When Belgian architect Wonne Ickx and Spanish curator Ruth Estévez bought a small 1910 row house in the Roma neighborhood of Mexico City ten years ago, the building was in rough shape, with earthquake-damaged floors and an awkward layout. After spending the past seven years living and teaching in Los Angeles, Ickx and Estévez have returned to the house with their two sons—but only after transforming it into a colorfully finished home.

Originally built as a suburban playground for Mexico City's captains of industry, Roma slipped into impoverishment and was eventually engulfed by the 20-million-strong megalopolis. The devastating 1985 earthquake, which killed thousands and leveled countless historic buildings, exacerbated the situation; the disaster was particularly brutal to the neighborhood, which sits on loose clay soil. In recent years, though, the area has finally seen a change in its luck. Filled with galleries, restaurants, art studios, and offices, the once-downtrodden neighborhood is taking part in Mexico City and its rich design scene.

Ickx, a partner in Mexico City-based firm PRODUCTORA, which led the renovation, and Estévez embraced some of the house's original character while updating and refining every room. Playing off of an existing green and black tile pattern on the ground floor, custom

Formica-clad built-ins were backed by deep green wainscoting, which wraps the family spaces. Throughout the rest of the home, a full range of verdant tones was introduced via locally sourced cement tiles, powder-coated steel details, rich Calacatta marble, and simply painted steel window frames. Offsetting this palette are natural and engineered wood finishes and floors. Recinto, a popular local black volcanic stone used on outdoor patios throughout the city, also makes an appearance.

Along with their careful attention to color and material, the architects reimagined the layout of the house. On the ground floor, the kitchen was moved out of a small space into the rear of the main living area. This made way for a small television room and a guest bedroom and ensured that the main living space would become the center of activity. The second floor was ceded to the kids, who also preside over a play area built above a small half bath below the staircase. The entire third floor is a master suite, complete with two plant-filled terraces.

In the years Ickx and Estévez lived in the U.S., the house was rented to a nearby gallery as art storage and office space. Now, as a thoughtfully finished family home, the petite row house is enjoying a second life.



**Above:** Even the space under the stairs is utilized. There, a small powder room and storage is topped with a children's play area accessed by a ship ladder.

**Facing page, top:** The clean lines of the kitchen are enlivened with green Calacatta marble by Grupo Arca. The restrained aesthetic is continued with the kitchen sink, oven, and stove by Teka, and the Smeg kitchen faucet.

**Facing page, bottom:** The top level's engineered wood flooring by MEISTER and tightly edited palette make for a master suite that directs attention to the lush exterior spaces. These Recinto-paved patios are classic modernist Mexico City spaces, which can be found throughout the local Roma neighborhood.



# Crafty, Y'all

Thoughtbarn's design for an ethically sourced homewares e-retailer is decorated like the homes of its customers.

*By Gabrielle Golenda*





**Previous page:** Custom maple details are featured throughout: in wall paneling, a structural system for the storefront walls, and framing glass dividing private offices and meeting rooms. Upon entering, visitors will find the logo lit by Juniper Lighting's linear modular system.

**Above:** In the lobby, visitors encounter The Citizenry's handcrafted products firsthand, such as ceramic plant pots, glazed vases, handwoven textiles, and pillows upholstered with traditional techniques.



Located in the heart of downtown Dallas, 400 Record was recently given a face-lift and an entirely new look—that is, on the inside. In 2015, Gensler gutted the 17-story tower after its tenant, the media company A. H. Belo Corporation, split into two entities and left the structure downright empty. The 11th floor is now home to the first headquarters of online retailer The Citizenry, with a story-driven design by Austin-based firm Thoughtbarn.

Thoughtbarn codirector Lucy Begg emphasized that the handcrafted nature of the company’s ethically sourced products was crucial to the company’s identity. “[Their story] translated into how we made these project elements, which are handcrafted by local contractors,” she explained. The maple-infused furniture and finishing elements throughout the space—including dividing-wall screening, lighting coves, recessed acoustic lighting, desk stations, conference tables, and 9-foot doors—were all custom-made by local workshops.

For Thoughtbarn, the office’s organization was straightforward: Desks occupy an open area by the window, while a walled core holds meeting rooms and private offices. A hybrid break room/cafe gathering area with movable furniture can also be used as an informal breakout space or for events or product showcasing.

Fittingly for a purveyor of things that make a house a home, the design has a residential character. With homewares as its backdrop, the space has a tellingly handmade aesthetic: pillows on banquette seating, rugs splayed at the feet of conference tables, woven storage baskets under desks. This is especially true in the conference rooms, where curated products are displayed according to their place of origin.

Rejecting corporate office tropes like frameless glass systems, Thoughtbarn devised pleasantly unexpected design solutions—all in softwood. Inspired by the shape of the conventional 1980s office facade, curvilinear glass walls framed in maple divide conference and meeting rooms. Meanwhile, expansive wood-slatted coves in raised ceilings absorb noise over the reception area and break room.

Like The Citizenry’s business model, the company’s HQ gives locally sourced designs context by highlighting both their specific origins and the American vernacular. “We set out to help establish and create relationships with small-scale artisanal workshops across the world and connect them to the global headquarters,” Begg said. “This allowed us to transpose the idea of knowing where products come from and their story.”



**Above:** Custom built-in linear lights by local contractor Bengé Texas frame the conference rooms. Custom desks by HATCH Workshop are overhung by pendants and spotlights by DCW Editions that break up the ceiling and give warmth.

**Right:** To improve the acoustic quality affordably, Thoughtbarn covered the ceilings with 2x2 Armstrong acoustic tiles. The tile arrangement allows for access to services in the ceiling, as well as custom lighting. Expansive coves made of wooden slats cover special areas like the reception and breakroom.





Lisa Petrole

# Glazed and Diffused Tiles

With motifs that are simultaneously glazed and unglazed, these tiles highlight the materiality of ceramics—a quality that is especially evident under soft light. *By Gabrielle Golenda*



**Diarama**  
Hella Jongerius for Mutina

By applying the same glaze to 7 different-colored matte clay bases, Dutch designer Hella Jongerius created 13 distinguishable chromatic patterns. The Diarama tiles fit together in light and dark macro-groups and are available in a single 3.5-by-7-inch format.

[mutina.it](http://mutina.it)



**Spectre**  
41zero42

The Spectre collection changes color when placed in different qualities of light. Matte and glossy tiles with holographic finishes can be combined to create iridescent and rhythmic surfaces. The 2-by-10-inch tiles come in 5-by-25-inch patterns and are available in four colorways.

[41zero42.com](http://41zero42.com)



**Kyushu**  
Ceramica Colli di Sassuolo

The Kyushu collection draws inspiration from the lush, mountainous landscapes of its namesake, Japan's third-largest island. The matte and gloss tiles are available in one 2-by-10-inch size and four earthy shades.

[colli.it](http://colli.it)

All images courtesy of the manufacturers



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# Cement-Style Surfaces

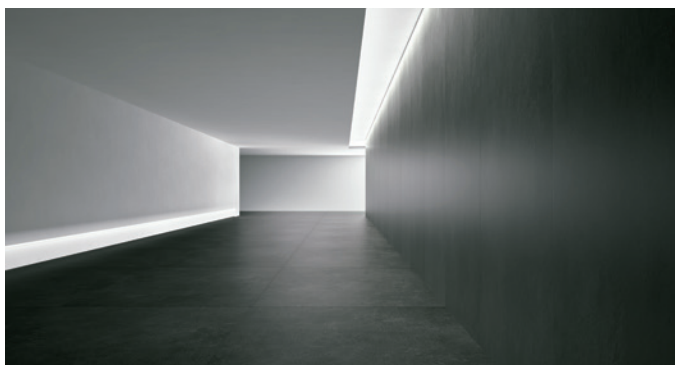
A little rough around the edges but ultimately smooth, these interior surfaces mimic the naturally occurring textures in poured cement. *By Gabrielle Golenda*



**New York - New York**  
**Neolith**

Aptly dubbed New York - New York, this sintered stone surface is inspired by the sidewalks lining the city's gridded streets. Perfect for flooring, backsplashes, and worktops, the slab product is resistant to scratching, high and low temperatures, and water damage.

[neolith.com](http://neolith.com)



**Aster Maximum**  
**Fiandre**

Ideal for both wall and floor applications, Aster Maximum porcelain tiles emulate the even relief of a completely smooth concrete surface. The Fiandre collection is available in three colorways and in large-format slabs of up to 48 square feet.

[granitifiandre.com](http://granitifiandre.com)



**Dekton Lunar**  
**Cosentino**

Designed by Phoenix-based architect Daniel Germani, Lunar is one of seven color variations in the Dekton Industrial collection. Its gritty white grain imitates the look of cement and is offered in three sizes up to 56 by 126 inches.

[cosentino.com](http://cosentino.com)

All images courtesy of the manufacturers

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# Quirky Qualities

Paul Andersen takes quirkiness seriously in the design of a house dedicated to his mother.

*By Jamie Evelyn Goldsborough*



**Previous spread:** On the exterior, Boral Nickel Gap siding is divided into several offset sections, extending the sense of movement in the building's plan.

**Top:** The custom exterior doors are made by Aluplast to match European-inspired proportions. Motherhouse has a total of 107 doors in the project, part of the subdued sense of "excess."

**Above:** The project's offset organization is notated by duo-tone White Oak flooring, and the tone splits in other finish materials, like the Caesarstone countertop in both Organic White and London Grey.

Courtesy Guest House

Architects have often designed homes for their mothers early in their careers: Robert Venturi's Vanna Venturi House and Charles Moore's Kathryn Moore House are just two of the most famous examples. A mother's unwavering belief in her child can be the catalyst for a successful career. Independent Architecture principal Paul Andersen conceived Motherhouse as an homage to his own parent. The result combines Andersen's scrutiny of European abstract modernism with an idiosyncratic American flair.

When designing Motherhouse, Andersen spent time studying suburban housing in Englewood, Colorado. (Some of this turned into an essay, "Play the Part," published in the magazine *Flat Out* in 2016.) His research takes the quirkiness of Americana seriously. Andersen approaches vernacular styles as ruled constructions of parts that are often found in peculiar combinations or arrangements; in this way, the mundane, ordinary stuff of everyday residential design begins to confront historical architectural discussions.

Motherhouse's abstraction reads like an ode to European design history—the project could be a funky younger sibling to O. M. Ungers's House Without Qualities, a precedent Andersen studied. But Motherhouse also channels an American exuberance, looking past modernism's continental austerity to uncover its more decadent aspects. Instead of focusing on the minimalism and reduction Ungers's house is frequently

associated with, Andersen extracted the project's excesses. Motherhouse is heavy on doors, a nod to the 178 doors in House Without Qualities.

Motherhouse's basic elements—colored siding, a gable roof, a detached garage, a patio—are typically American, if exaggerated: There are ten gables; the siding comes in two colors; and the patio's footprint takes up as much of the lot as possible. But its square plan bears Palladian influences, albeit with a twist—Motherhouse's symmetry is rotational rather than axial. An extra quarter module in the project's organization sets the identical front and rear facades in motion, the siding jogs between the first and second floors, and the front gables are offset from the rear.

On the interior, the purposeful misalignments are registered in finish and material changes: Floors are stained in shifting stripes of two different tones, and the kitchen island marble and bathroom tile are split into white and gray patches. The first floor has a full perimeter of entry and closet doors, accentuating access and storage. On the second floor, each room has a different ceiling condition because of its position relative to the intersecting gables: at the ridge, in the valley, or halfway in between.

Andersen's dichotic injection of American surprise and delight into European modernism, like any good hybrid, blends two traditions into a new and refreshing take.



A stairwell provides the only interior separation on the open plan first floor.



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Amid soaring rents, these creatives are redefining design on Canada's West Coast. *By Evan Pavka*

# Vancouver Values



Ye Rin Mok/Courtesy Poketo

Since hosting the Winter Olympics in 2010, Vancouver has rapidly ascended to the rank of international hub of commerce and culture. Projects by local heavyweights Patkau Architects and Bing Thom Architects (now Revery Architecture) dot the city's skyline, while structures by Bjarke Ingels Group, Shigeru Ban, and Herzog & de Meuron are taking shape. It's a shift that hasn't gone unnoticed by the city's fledgling design scene. Though a number of prominent figures—from celebrated architect Arthur Erickson to artist-turned-author-turned-artist-again Douglas Coupland—have called the West Coast metropolis home, the past decade witnessed another cohort of multihyphenate creatives who have set up shop here.

And while much of this physical expansion and economic transformation has resulted in skyrocketing real estate prices, a new generation of designers continue to carve out their own space. With property values rising over 50 percent in the last five years, many studios have found unique ways of working autonomously and together. Among them, collaborative ventures and hyperlocal producers are forging bonds with manufacturers both at home and abroad. From a contemporary blacksmith to a dynamic lighting trio, here are five of the leading practices shaping design in the city.



# ANDlight

What happens when you combine an experienced business manager, a Vancouver and Berlin–educated industrial designer, and an award-winning, Design Academy of Eindhoven–trained creative? The answer: ANDlight. Founded by Matt Davis, Caine Heintzman (facing page, left), and Lukas Peet (facing page, right) in 2013, the lighting design and manufacturing brand has become the go-to for well-crafted fixtures conceived and fabricated in the city’s Downtown Eastside neighborhood. Recent releases include Heintzman’s single- and multi-pendant Vale series (above), featuring an undulating diffuser and an electrical assembly integrated within its thin frame, and Peet’s Pivot light, a line of table lamps defined by a balancing aluminum shade that orbits an opaque sphere.

[andlight.ca](http://andlight.ca)



# Ben Barber Studio

From a spherical steel chair that riffs off of minimalist sculpture for American retailer The Future Perfect to inaugural lighting collection Bora, launched last May at New York Design Week, the refined yet substantial work of Ben Barber's namesake studio has gained a significant international following. Having studied sculpture at New York's Pratt Institute, Barber brings an emphasis on space and form to works like the Pluto Table, featuring a glass top fixed to a spun-metal base via a bronze fastener, and the precision-cut aluminum Sanora tables (above). Each is designed and manufactured in the Vancouver area and conceived to be fully customizable with various finishes and dimensions.

[benbarberstudio.com](http://benbarberstudio.com)

Courtesy Ben Barber Studio





## Calen Knauf Studio

After a successful stint as one half of design duo Knauf and Brown—racking up accolades at major design events in Cologne, Stockholm, and elsewhere since their debut in 2013—the Emily Carr University of Art + Design graduate Calen Knauf branched off and established his own firm in 2019. From his studio in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood, Knauf crafts impossibly refined objects, such as the desktop Elli Mirror (above), that push

everyday materials and techniques to their aesthetic and conceptual limits. The firm’s recent peach-toned Stutter Light fixture was carved from a solid block using a five-axis CNC machine, giving the sleek luminaire a lifelike slouch.

[calenknauf.com](http://calenknauf.com)



Stefanie Dueck

# Stefanie Dueck

Honey dippers, door handles, chopsticks, and more: Nothing is off-limits for metalsmith Stefanie Dueck. First trained in ceramics and later in metal arts, Dueck carries the charm and sense of imperfection embodied in the craft of metalworking into her hand-forged flatware. This approach is evident in the Smash Series (above)—a line of stainless steel and bronze spoons whose bowls resemble delicate lily pads—and her most recent collection of

steel flasks ornamented with hammer marks. In addition to being a staple of Address, an annual design exhibition that spotlights female, queer, and POC designers, Dueck also creates large-scale sculptural artworks and custom commissioned pieces.

[stefaniedueck.com](http://stefaniedueck.com)



# New Format

Led by self-taught designer Henry Norris, New Format launched in 2016 and has since developed a distinct portfolio of furnishings defined by distilled material palettes and subtle references to the West Coast vernacular. Norris's Lincoln lounge chair features a delicate bronze-cap accent, a blackened steel frame, and a hued leather cover, while the aluminum Mers collection (above) takes its cue from the fishing boats lining Vancouver's Coal Harbour. Offered in seven muted colorways inspired by the ocean vessels, the indoor and outdoor line of tables—like each piece by New Format—is carefully handmade inside the studio's space at the 1000 Parker Street warehouse.

[newformatstudio.com](http://newformatstudio.com)



Steven Koch

# Messing with Mies

Could Be Architecture's new installation riffs on Mies van der Rohe's iconic McCormick House.

*By Adrian Madlener*



**Facing page:** An impromptu puppet theater emerges from within one of the pink curtains. The amenity adds to the playful and interactive nature of the installation.

**Above:** A number of mint green, geometric furnishings are featured throughout the installation. These ambiguous objects reveal their actual functions once visitors have engaged with them.

A visit to the Elmhurst Art Museum this spring might be more than you were bargaining for. A new installation by experimental Chicago-based practice Could Be Architecture is shaking up what might seem like a sleepy regional kunsthalle to question established notions of domesticity and historic preservation. At the same time, the studio's playful and interactive intervention champions public engagement.

Located on the outskirts of Chicago, the Elmhurst Art Museum is known for its support of local artists and robust education program. With the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe–designed McCormick House sitting adjacent to its main facility, the institution has also put a particular emphasis on architecture. Since the house was transplanted to its current location in 1994, a number of the museum's exhibitions have examined the impact of architecture on the Chicago area as well as its representation in other mediums, like painting and photography.

Some shows have focused specifically on Mies's influence on the region, including through conceptual or speculative approaches to themes as varied as global citizenship and the advent of the "glass house" in relation to his work. Recent exhibitions have focused on the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus school, of which the German-American architect was the last director. Several projects have sought to recontextualize the McCormick residence, one of only three single-family homes Mies ever realized. (The others are the nearby Farnsworth House and the Villa Tugendhat in Brno, Czech





**Facing page:** Only a few portions of Mies's original glass curtain walls are left exposed. The pink curtain inserts subvert the home's original open plan layout.

**Above:** Various games are sprinkled throughout the installation. A series of chess sets play on the idea of the Miesian grid.

Republic.) New modes of exhibition-making, such as VR installations, have been employed to better understand and even challenge the architect's legacy.

Joining this trajectory is Could Be Architecture's bold intervention. On view through mid-April, *McCormick AfterParti* seeks to reactivate the austere structure and in turn subverts some of the main tenets of Miesian modernism, including the doctrine "less is more." "Directly located within one of [Mies's] projects, it's impossible for our installation to ignore him and his architecture," Could Be Architecture coprincipal Joseph Altshuler said. "For us, this project involves riffing on and celebrating, but also messing with, the Miesian grid."

Evoking the non-load bearing wall panels that were characteristic of Mies's practice, Altshuler and partner Zack Morrison devised a scheme that uses long pink curtains to block out much of the home's curtain wall exterior and reorient its open floorplan. Laid out in a sort of loose maze, these room-dividing fabrics create a sense of mystery and promote exploration. Visitors happen upon interactive elements such as pullout seating, an impromptu puppet theater, and even a kitchen serving up small consumable treats during certain events. Throughout, graphic elements suggest a "serious playfulness" that is indicative of the young practice's approach.

"You enter the house through the recently restored carport and immediately encounter colorful curtains that demarcate the living room," Altshuler explained. "We created a number of mint green, geometric furnishings that are inserted in the space to suggest different functions. Visitors are able to eventually decipher that one object is a sofa and another is a coatrack. Around the corner, a large, life-size gridded chess set occupies what would normally be the dining room. The kitchen and playroom can be found in another wing of the house. Farther in, a bedroom features a daybed that you can relax on. In that instance, you occupy a space in a less than conventional polite gallery."

The overall scheme celebrates the messiness, vibrance, and joy of domestic life rather than the imposed, machine-driven efficiency associated with modernism. However, for Could Be Architecture, reactivating the building in a manner that departs so radically from the architect's intentions does not constitute parody or critique—rather, it reveals the house's resilience. In a way, *McCormick AfterParti* proves that this seemingly intransigent structure, often perceived as an inert artifact, can be adapted to function as a warm home.

"Our installation isn't meant to be an inside joke or ironic in the way that I think a lot of mainstream post-modernism is," Altshuler concluded. "It's actually a sincere celebration of the home that invites people to earnestly participate in its history. The museum is clearly invested in thinking about the past and future preservation efforts of the house through different means and changing attitudes. Our intervention is implicitly connected to that brief."

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# Tati's Tête-à-Tête

Purposely playful furniture inspired by Jacques Tati pokes fun at midcentury design. *By Gabrielle Golenda*



Benoît Rüdiger



**Facing page:** The Tati Rocking Chair features a purposely excessive design. While the bright yellow cushion and seat back are fully functional, the ridiculously long base rocks into an unnecessary range of motion (that would most likely result in flipping).

**Above:** The front yard at Villa Arpel features quintessential modern tropes, including seemingly rational geometries, synthetic materials (in this case, artificially colored rocks), and overly planned layouts. Through encounters with the film's protagonist, these elements reveal the inconveniences caused by their design.

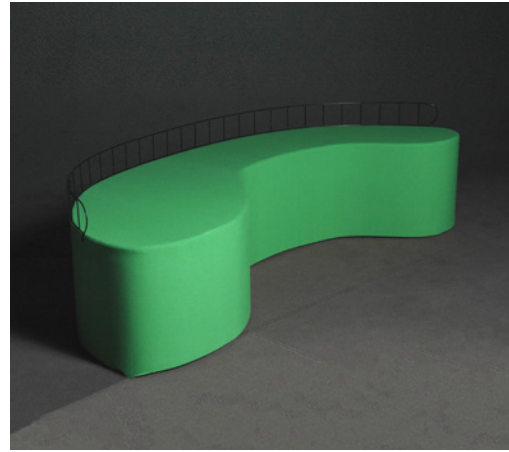
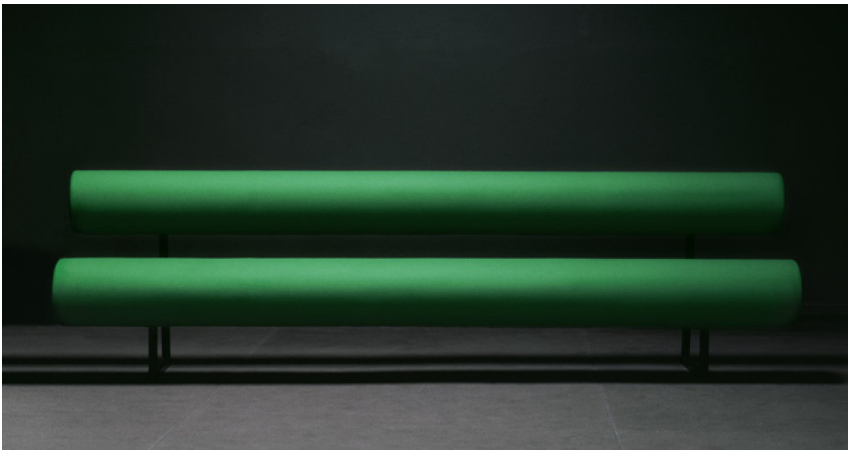
*Les lignes géométriques ne rendent pas les gens aimables.*  
(Geometrical lines do not make people likeable.)

—Jacques Tati

It was 1958, a time of rapid economic growth in France and the United States. After the hardships of two world wars, a newfound prosperity reigned. It was the period of the International Style, an aesthetic driven by standardization and function, devoid of ornamentation and historical references.

The French filmmaker and actor Jacques Tati answered the era with the fifth film that he directed, a striking critique of modern architecture and design: *Mon Oncle*. The entirety of the film takes place at Villa Arpel, a Villa Savoye-esque boxy house filled with plastic furniture and high-tech appliances, where the protagonist, Monsieur Hulot, visits his nine-year-old nephew, Gérard Arpel. In a series of ongoing gags, the beloved uncle (played by Tati) is confronted by Gérard's parents' conspicuous displays of materialism.

The story unfolds in various scenes where comical interactions reveal the nonsensical quirks of modern life. In one scene, M. Hulot comes into contact with a bizarre grouping of Acapulco chairs. Somehow, everyone else manages to find a comfortable spot without fuss, but when the protagonist tries to sit, it appears as if he has fallen into a bucket and cannot get out. As others adjust themselves, M. Hulot attempts to rest as he would in a more traditional chair. The bit captures Tati's suggestion that contemporary furniture like the chair is merely a stylistic representation of function—a design that is a statement about utility as opposed to an object that actually works. In the film, only M. Hulot seems to notice the chair's truth.



**Above:** Tati's three seats impressed visitors to the French Pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014. Today, the trio resides in both public and private collections, perhaps most notably the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Here, the contemporary reinterpretations by Domeau & Pérès are almost identical to the originals designed by Tati: Mrs. Arpel Sofa, Tati Rocking Chair, and Mr. Hulot Daybed.

**Facing page:** Like the visually appealing, but ultimately unfunctional, seats designed by Tati, the set design includes a number of elements that cause tensions between the mise-en-scène and the actors. With design that holds style over substance, the chairs become testaments of the impracticality of modern design.

Courtesy Les Ateliers Courbet and Thirwall Design



Celebrating the filmmaker's satire, New York gallery Les Ateliers Courbet joined forces with architecture studio Thirlwall Design to make a mock-up of the Villa Arpel, while French design firm Domeau & Pérès took to the director's archives to re-create some of the set's props. The resulting show, *Please Be Seated*, features three chairs that were inspired by originals Tati had designed for *Mon Oncle*. On view for the first time in New York, the limited-edition trio comprises a sofa with little or no seating space, a daybed with a precarious railing, and a rocking chair that easily tips over. These seats channel Tati to suggest the superficial pleasures of modern design.

*Mon Oncle* is filled with bewitching interactions between people, furniture, and the built environment. The deliberately showy sets come to life whenever the Arpel parents try to impress their guest with their ultra-modern surroundings. While M. and Mme. Arpel ignore inconveniences inflicted on them by their home, M. Hulot and his nephew are amused by the collision of "rational" geometries and technologies.

Plot is secondary for Tati, as he is mainly concerned with *mise-en-scène*. Lighting, sound, set design, and visual effects take center stage. Tati spends a considerable amount of time in the Villa Arpel's garden, which features Mondrian-like colored stone walkways. A number of scenes depict people awkwardly navigating the space, a seemingly rational plan of paved paths and grass beds that leads to a series of comedic interactions. During a dinner party scene, for example, guests

uncomfortably follow or pass one another to avoid stepping on the pristine green patches. On another occasion, M. Hulot hops over gaps instead of following the swooping, inconvenient pathway. The garden rather ridiculously inhibits people from using it for its intended purpose.

From the inconveniently placed stepping stones to the noisy appliances in the villa's kitchen, nearly every detail of the set underlines the impracticality of superfluous electric gizmos and how austere aesthetics subvert everyday life. Tati's sets and furniture confront viewers with the question: When does functionality become just another style?

The installation first appeared at Design Miami in December 2019 and will be on view in Les Ateliers Courbet's Manhattan gallery space through the end of March.



Benoît Fougeirol

**Above:** Circular windows on the house's upper floors appear like eyes. The watchful omnipresence witnesses M. Hulot in a series of ongoing gags with the appliances and gadgets. In this sadistic arrangement, the home can never acknowledge the truths only M. Hulot seems to notice.



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