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NEW YORK CITY AND PARIS /
@R.A. WORKSHOP

Rich Aybar

When encountering the works of New York City- and Paris-based designer Rich Aybar, you might not immediately realize that his honey-hued furniture is made from rubber. Aybar's interest in the material grew out of his work as a fashion consultant for Rick Owens. The job came with a yearly trip to Milan's Salone del Mobile, where he realized that few people were using rubber in furniture. "I was curious about its lack of presence," says Aybar. While living in Berlin, a city full of rubber in its nightlife scene, he was surprised by how difficult it was to acquire for his own designs. But by working backward and following the material, he tapped into the industries that actually did use it. His search started with the Los Angeles film industry and then took him to a big fabrication house that works with Florida's Disney World. At nearly 400 pounds per chair, the work isn't exactly easy to transport. But the benefit of using rubber is its resiliency—most of Aybar's designs won't need a "fragile" stamp. —JS

MILAN / @ABREHAM.

Abraham Brioschi

Milan designer Abraham Brioschi is focused on creating "products that have their own narrative." The guiding force of his work is translating traditional shapes and concepts from his native Ethiopia into functional furniture. "African design is extremely attentive to details and materials, to waste and functionality," Brioschi says. His first and second collections consist of sculptural wooden seating designs, like the Lefiaté chair, with its crescent-shaped platform, which references headrests used for centuries in Ethiopia and other parts of eastern Africa to safeguard elaborate hairstyles during sleep. In the future, Brioschi plans to tackle new forms and incorporate new materials into projects, including Italian marble and Murano glass. "It is very important to combine my African roots with Italian ones." —Sarah Duder

K. Dancalia rug



BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA / @MAGNETICMIDNIGHTMAISON

Magnetic Midnight Maison

Lucía Echavarría has always been drawn to festive moments. When she started her Bogotá, Colombia, fashion studio, Magnetic Midnight, nearly a decade ago, it was only fitting for her works to feel celebratory. What started as a collection of one-of-a-kind headpieces evolved through the years to include other small accessories and, most recently, into home wares as Magnetic Midnight Maison. Echavarría is not only expanding her design focus but also looking at new materials. She credits Colombia's unique geographical position and biodiversity for its range of raw materials, particularly natural fibers. "Furniture gave me the possibility of a much bigger canvas," she says. "The aspect I connect the most with is the ability of craft to tell a story." —Sarah LaTrent

† Sibundoy table lamp



HELSINKI / @DD_HQ

Didi NG Wing Yin

The Hong Kong-born and Helsinki-based designer Didi NG Wing Yin works almost exclusively with wood, a material that's abundant in Finland. With his Pleats project—a collection of vases, benches, and tables—he's been able to challenge traditional applications. "I've gained an appreciation for how it's used so practically but also freely here: as much for furniture as for firewood heating saunas," he says. "Back where I'm from, it's viewed as more precious." Wing Yin mills massive blocks of fir before brushing and cutting away at the surface to reveal a new type of striated finish. Part of his goal with the Pleats project is to uncover a different facet of this material's essence. "We always want to touch things. This is another way of learning. We don't just do so with our eyes." —AM

▲ Pleats vases

WHAT SKILL WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO LEARN?

Welding and more artisanal handcrafts... and the piano.
BMDO

It'd be cool to learn how to ride a horse. Imagine how amazing it would feel to ride really fast on a horse in a big group of horses with all your friends.
Ellen Peng

Speed-reading.
Didi NG Wing Yin

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

I bring back a stone every time I travel to another country or region. Now I have dozens of small stones the size of a fist. It's inspiring to look at the stones, and it also reminds me of the memories of the trip. Stones have their own uniqueness and have beauty that humans cannot create.
Sian Lee

I have a large framed print of Botticelli's Venus I found at Goodwill, and I will take it everywhere with me until I die.
Autumn Casey

My Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
Leo Raspar