



BALENCIAGA



FUNCTIONAL ART GALLERY: FINN MEIER



GREEM JEONG



FUNCTIONAL ART CAN BE A USEFUL STATEMENT PIECE FOR ANY OUTDOOR SPACE, SAYS ANJI CONNELL

EYE CANDY FOR YOUR OUTDOOR ROOM

Fill your outdoor spaces with functional art – These pieces are pushing boundaries and concepts with an urban edge. In 2020, we will see more sustainable materials as well as active and exciting reuse of waste products, transforming them into bold and colourful functional art, set to capture our attentions and send our social media crazy. We define functional art as a design that crosses the line – art that has been created with the intent of function.

Designers are no longer concerned with mass production and conventional functionality. They are artfully reimagining post-industrial waste into a new and functional aesthetic. Benoît Wolfrom and Javier Peres Functional Art Gallery's space in Berlin, for instance, focuses on art that blurs the lines between sculpture, visual art, and furniture design. All of the artists they represent make everything themselves – all the pieces are unique, and they are all functional.

Functional Art Berlin's presentation at Design Miami/Basel in December 2019 showcased, amongst others, the striking work by OrtaMiklos in all its technicolour glory. The French-Danish design duo Leo Orta and Victor Miklos Andersen create pieces out of bright

orange, lilac, and turquoise cardboard pulp moulded around steel frames.

Crude, wonky, and proudly handmade, the pieces show how large-scale craftsmanship today comes with no clearly defined aesthetic. Their work is flamboyantly theatrical, sculptural, and – importantly – it's functional. Accidental marks made on the raw materials during their creation are celebrated as giving the pieces personality. 'The White Ladies' are a prime example of their eye-catching and humorous works. A pair of lamp/seal hybrids made from concrete, cast in women's tights and electrical cables, are made from carved foam and resin.

Korean designer Greem Jeong takes on springs for her Mono series. Employing silicone tubes – typically an industrial material used to protect wires or pipes – are wrapped around a steel core. Jeong uses this basic material to form everything from table bases to a stiff bench, in velvety blue to brilliant banana yellow with three-dimensional doodle-like lines. Not as extreme (but no less arresting) is Dutch designer Floris Wubben's 3m-long ceramic table constructed by using extruded ceramic. It is a colossal, sense-defying piece of furniture.

British designer Faye Toogood's furniture and objects demonstrate an ongoing preoccupation with materiality and experimentation. The distinctive, reassuringly chunky lines of her Roly-Poly furniture collection become even more inviting in her new collaboration with design house Diade. The polyethylene mono-bloc sofa is made for both outdoor and indoor use; it comes in ochre, red brick, peat, charcoal, concrete, and flesh.

Toogood's lava stone tile collaboration with ceramics brand range



ORTAMIKLOS



FINN MEIER



BENTU DESIGN: WRECK CERAMICS



GUFRAM DISCO RUG

FAYE TOOGOOD ROLY POLY SOFA

LINDE FREYA

INSPIRE

ENIS AKIEV PLASTIC STONE TILES

NADINE GÖPFERT

PLASTICIET

Made a Mano is made from stone taken from Sicily's Mount Etna. Tiles come in multiple sizes, in simple geometric shapes with contrasting gloss and matte sections which emphasise the patterns and evoke the distorted crater scape of a volcano. Toogood used red, white, grey, and brown to represent the different colours of lava as it cools down. They make a fabulous backdrop to her beautifully formed furniture.

“THESE PIECES ARE PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND CONCEPTS WITH AN URBAN EDGE”

Nadine Goepfert's Soft Shell, Hard Core is a collaborative project with Koos Breen to produce a range of furniture with protected edges, exaggerating function over aesthetics in a fun way. The soft objects can be added to any piece of domestic furniture and are extremely useful for family gardens and busy spaces.

Bert & May's hand-poured tiles are a collaboration with London design label Darkroom. They feature simple geometric shapes that can be matched to create a uniform pattern or placed randomly to create an abstract look that will update a space spectacularly – a superb backdrop to planting too.

Chinese studio Bentu Design works to highlight the amount of waste that is produced within the ceramics industry. The 'Wreck' collection includes side tables and benches made from a mix of recycled ceramic and concrete that leaves the shards visible on the surface.

Bentu noticed that globalisation, and increased demand for ceramic pieces, had driven a wave of new factories in Chaozhou, China.

Although this growing demand creates jobs and opportunities, the downside means there is an increased amount of waste produced. Bentu hopes that it can highlight and promote the value of utilising waste.

Belgian designer Charlotte Jonckheer believes sustainability is an important element of the design process. Jonckheer's side tables are named Chaud, after the name of the paper and stone composite material she developed to make them. Curved recycled paper tops are supported by stone dust legs. Interestingly, there are two materials that have similarities on the surface but have a completely different feel and material qualities. Jonckheer used salvaged offcuts from local print shops that are untreated and therefore fully recyclable.

Rotterdam designers Marten van Middelkoop and Joost Dingemans' Plasticiet is a sheet-plastic made from recycled plastic collected from companies across the Netherlands, similar in appearance to manmade stone composites like terrazzo. Made in various size sheets, pieces of coloured plastic are used to produce a variety of effects.

Kazakhstani designer Enis Akiev's Plastic Stone Tiles are made from discarded single-use plastic by emulating the organic process that occurs in the natural formation of rock.

Balenciaga and Crosby Studio founder Harry Nuriev have created the Balenciaga Sofa to acknowledge the brand's responsibility in offsetting its environmental impact. Worn, discarded, and obsolete garments are

compacted inside a transparent covering made from BOPP (biaxially oriented polypropylene) film, which is said to biodegrade over time.

Studio Mumbai's circular stone armchair is carved out of a large rock found in their immediate surroundings using simple tools and gestures of the hand.

Linde Freya Crossvault Seat and Bolder Seat and Bold Table are made to be used outside in aluminium.

Functional Art Gallery artist Théophile Blandet worked with plastics that can't be recycled. He envisions a future where plastic will be a

forbidden material, treating it as 'the ivory of the future'. Developing his interest in the future of materials, he is now focusing on aluminium. Blandet compares aluminium to gold, soft metals that will never run out. He claims that aluminium is one of the materials of the future, being the third most abundant resource on earth and every part of the metal being recyclable. It can be re-melted and reused *ad infinitum*.

'The grass is always greener on the other side', Koos Breen's hand shaved artificial turf carpet, is a fun take on fake grass and will lift the pieces to even higher heights. For fair weather or under cover, a Gufram Disco Rug will make it all sing.

ABOUT ANJI CONNELL

Internationally recognised interior architect and landscape designer, Anji Connell, is a detail-obsessed Inchbald Graduate, and has been collaborating with artisans and craftsmen to create bespoke and unique interiors for a discerning clientele since 1986. Anji is a stylist, feature writer and lover of all things art and design.

www.anjiconnellinteriordesign.com