
BULLETIN

Goings-on in the world of design.



Vancouver jewelry designer Erica Leal, known for her meticulous 3D-printed and acrylic inlay pieces, is stepping out of her geometric comfort zone with a new limited-edition collection, *At Play*. Debuted in October 2019, *At Play* features feminine, one-of-a-kind wire-wrapped earrings, floral-shaped pendants, and delicate chain-linked bracelets made without any help from modern technology. “I have a lot of freedom to experiment with forms at a faster pace than with my other line,” Leal says. “When I get tired of carefully cutting and placing colorful pieces of acrylic from my original line, I can take a break and try out a shape I’ve thought of for *At Play*.” Crafted from hand-molded, malleable wax, cast in silver, and then embedded with tiny gemstones, each piece in the collection is slightly imperfect, showing minute variations that include the occasional impression of Leal’s fingerprints. “*At Play* is a little more open-ended than my other work,” she says. “I can make jewelry or an object. It’s a continuous process of exploration.”

—Annette Maxon with Claire Butwinick



FROM LEFT: Light stacks in artist Matt Gagnon's Los Angeles studio; close-up shot of a single light stack. Gagnon uses industrial materials such as concrete, acrylic, and glass.



COURTESY MATT GAGNON AND WINSTON WÄCHTER FINE ART

Crossed Lines

Contemporary art gallery Winston Wächter brings cutting-edge design into high-art spaces with its 2020 series showcasing the revolutionary work of three rising LA creatives.

By RACHEL GALLAHER

DEBATES HAVE LONG RAGED IN THE CREATIVE WORLD OVER WHERE—AND WHETHER—LINES SHOULD BE DRAWN BETWEEN FINE ART AND DESIGN. Does an invisible boundary separate objects from one another, rendering some worthy of display in galleries, and others fit only for our homes? Functionality plays a role in this kind of categorization, of course, but who's to say that a chair can't also be a work of art? (The Bertoia chair immediately comes to mind.) As definitions of both art and design broaden, warp, and inevitably overlap, gallerists around the world are opening their doors, and their wall space, to welcome work by creatives who don't fit easily inside predictable aesthetic borders.

This March, Winston Wächter Fine Art, a bicoastal contemporary gallery with spaces in Seattle and New York, becomes the latest to embrace a design-centric approach as it launches a new program dedicated to artists working in media such as textiles, furnishings, and glass. "Winston Wächter has always appreciated how design and fine art live and work together," says Stacey Winston Levitan, who cofounded the gallery in 1995 with Christine Wächter-Campbell. "Synergy between the two has always existed. Collectors who are interested in fine art also care about furniture, design, and the overall aesthetic of their homes and spaces. Our gallery has shown ceramics and objects and incorporated furniture into our exhibitions since our inception. This series feels like the natural next step in marrying our interests in art and design." »

Slated for Winston Wächter's Seattle gallery, the series features three Los Angeles-based artists in turn, starting with Matt Gagnon, whose pieces—ranging from furniture and sculpture to wall installations—appear in London's flagship Louis Vuitton store, the Four Seasons Seattle, and the W Maldives Resort, among other high-profile locales. It was his work at the new Peter Marino-designed Louis Vuitton store that first caught Levitan's eye. Several of Gagnon's signature light stacks—illuminated pillars of layered concrete, pine, ash, acrylic, and LED lighting—command the well of the shop's double-helix-shaped staircase. "We were instantly drawn to the work," says Levitan. "Matt himself is an architect and designer, and we connected to his exploration of light and material and the overall design sensibility of his work and process. The complex yet simple elegance of his aesthetic resonates with the gallery and

"Elevating design to a museum setting creates a new context and value for everyday objects."

—STACEY WINSTON LEVITAN

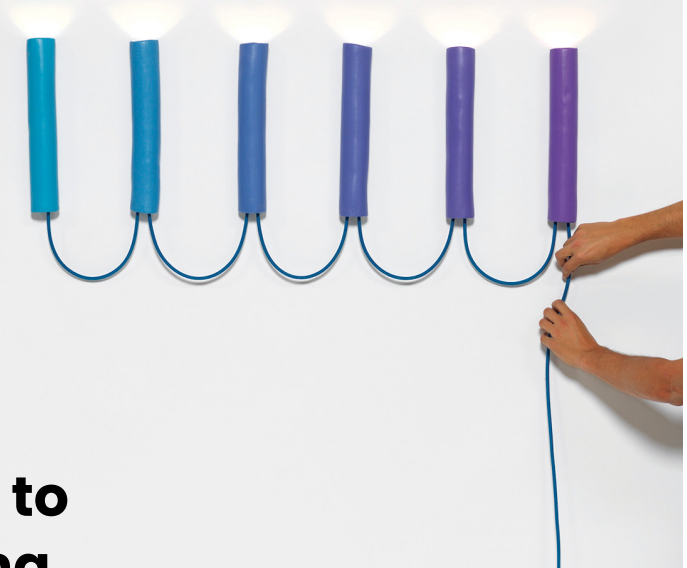
the work we present here."

Gagnon's show, *MATERIAL MEMORIES*, which runs from March 14 to May 2, features a selection of his light stacks. "As many as I can pull off in the next few months," he says with a laugh when asked how many he'll present. "I use a similar mindset to approach this work as I did when I was an architect. I'm interested in the poetic side of spaces. When you put all these different materials together, it changes the way the light comes through the acrylic. It's an additive process, an assemblage of parts. All these parts on their own are mundane, but when you put them together, they transform." He's assembling the individual stacks in his LA studio and will ship them to Seattle to be arranged in the gallery. "The space will inform the final configuration," he explains.

THIS SUMMER, Winston Wächter Seattle will open an exhibition of work from furniture designer Ryan Belli. His fantastical pieces, which merge brilliantly hued forms both organic and alien, reflect the influence of the Haas Brothers, with whom he interned (briefly—he was hired after just three days) while studying product design at Pasadena's ArtCenter College of Design. The gallery is currently keeping hush about the third exhibition, but it will feature work by a female textile artist, nicely rounding out the trifecta of product design categories.

"The gallery has always been a place that has presented interesting and unique work and curated experiences with its audience," says Levitan, who has personally collected design-related objects for years. "Elevating design to a museum setting creates a new context

FROM TOP: The Calley scone and the Shuggie couch by designer Ryan Belli blend whimsy with utility.



and value for everyday objects. In the past 10 years, design fairs and gallery exhibitions have brought attention to many previously unknown artists, artisans, and craftspeople. We think of this series as the logical progression of our mission as an arts center in our community." ✱