

# Design Miami Basel 2012

An incursion into the Swiss edition of the fair, searching for originality: from young Adrien Petrucci's conceptual approach, to the poetics of Formafantasma, and to India as seen by Studio Job. A [design report](#) from [Basel](#) by [Maria Cristina Didero](#)

At this year's [Design Miami/Basel](#) everything centred on contemporary design, in a triumph of the modern and the limited edition; two categories that, for different reasons, had a single common denominator — figures ending in several zeros. From the wonderful 1930s' anthropomorphic pieces displayed by Paris' [Franck Laigneau Gallery](#), reviving the much-debated and controversial Rudolf Steiner, to the original seating-sculpture by [Friedrich Kiesler](#) — originally created for Peggy Guggenheim's [Art of This Century gallery](#), and now exhibited by Berlin's [Ulrich Fiedler gallery](#) —, the DesignMiami/Basel jamboree looked to the present while rereading the history of collectors still unable to forego the hunt for the finest Prouvé period piece.

The iconic fair, directed by [Marianne Goebel](#) (well versed on both design history and more experimental productions), this year presented the new [Fernando and Humberto Campana](#) collection for [Roman O Gallery](#). The *Brazilian Baroque Collection* features a sofa and chair with a bombastic, hyper-decorated, gilded-bronze structure that at first glance conjures up Louis XV. Upon closer inspection, you catch sight of jungle animals, here welded in silver, that have always marked the two brothers' work. Two salon pieces are lined with Cipria eco-fur as a reminder that luxury is a game that should not be taken seriously and that appearances do not always correspond to the reality. The sofa-chair duo is combined with two lilac chairs and two candelabra, one in dark-brown Turkish alabaster and one in white Carrara marble — completing a series derived from the designers' long and much-loved stay in Rome.

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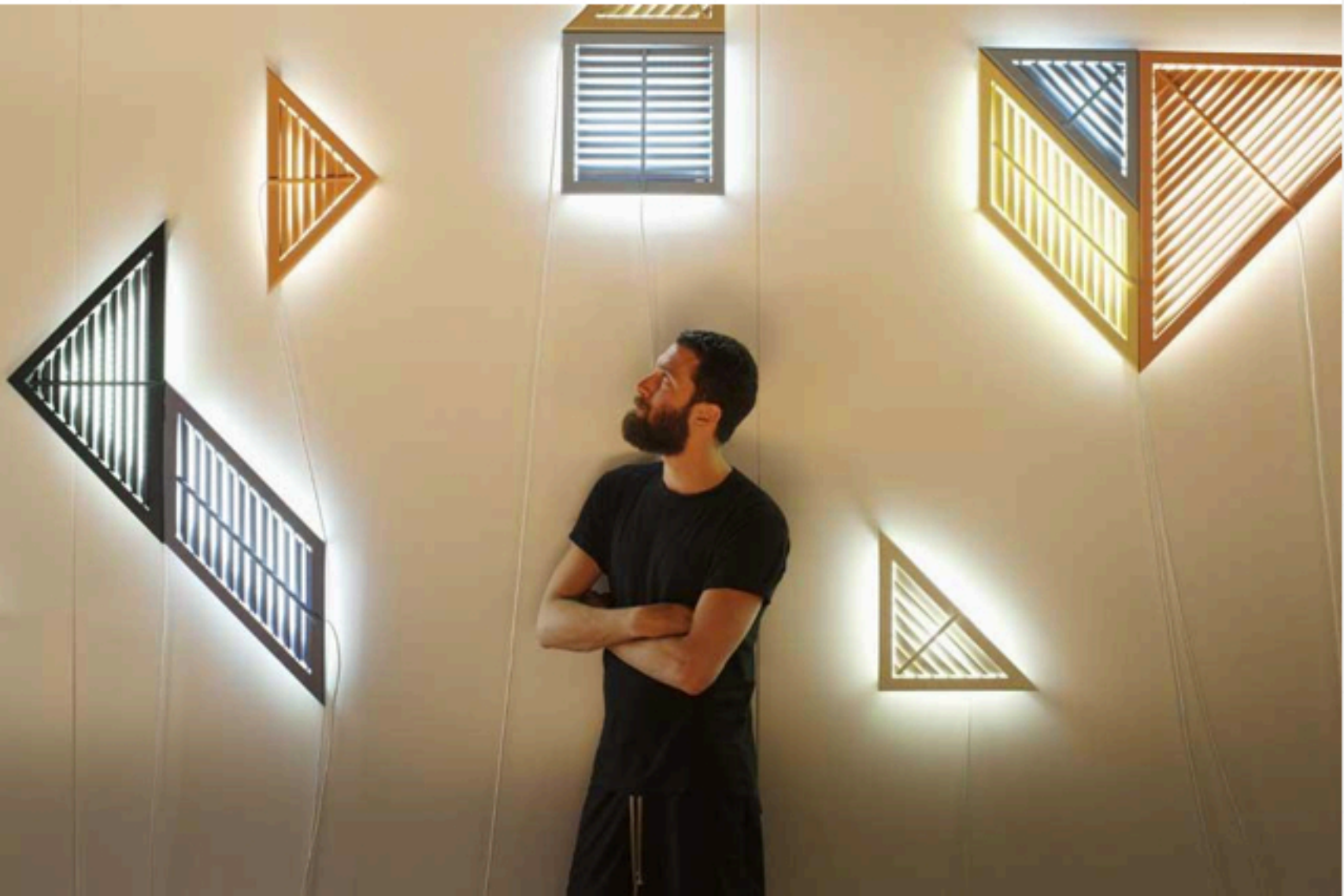
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For the [Carpenters Workshop Gallery](#), [Studio Job](#) thought of far-off places and dreamt of the India of the maharajahs before overturning the Taj Mahal and making a bronze table out of it – the 2012 *Taj Mahal Table* in an edition of eight. [Arik Levy's](#) geometric lines for the [Priveekollektie Gallery](#) of Contemporary Art and Design translate into an intricate pale-marble table that twists on itself and is called *Knot Table*.



**Formafantasma** prove once again how special they are — although we already knew that — and have worked with **Fendi** to create *Craftica*, an uncommonly poetic collection accompanied by a live-demonstration. Here, the duo and a saddler explored new ways of using discarded leather from the fashion label's production process. A wall of parchments featuring drawings by **Francesco Zorzi** represented the iconic uses of this material with historic references ranging from medieval armour to Le Corbusier and Joe Colombo. The drawings stood next to stools in salmon or perch skin and covered wood, a leather screen with a large shiny marble button, saddlebags, and pitchers choked by ties in goat's gut that you are tempted to touch but hold back. Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin prove yet again that their inventiveness is boundless, and manage to do their very best even when the field of action is limited to a single material. "Leather represents the complex relationship between man and nature" they say. "Playing with the exotic — and with a touch of fetish — we have always accompanied it with natural materials such as shells, marine sponges, boar bristles, ox bladder and bones."



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Fernando and Humberto Campana, *Brazilian Baroque Collection* for the Roman O Gallery. The collection features a sofa and chair with a bombastic, hyper-decorated, gilded-bronze structure that at first glance conjures up Louis XV. Upon closer inspection, you catch sight of jungle animals, here welded in silver, that have always marked the two brothers' work

Formafantasma also work with the clever [Libby Sellers](#), the first curator of the [London Design Museum](#) and then gallery director who, at Design Miami/Basel, is presenting a number of revamps on the royal game of chess, including [Fredrikson Stallard's Chess Set](#) in concrete and bronze. A fun and fascinating work on clocks is entitled *The Clock Clock White* – 24 analogical clocks to make one larger digital clock for the Brussels gallery of [Victor Hunt Dealer](#). At the [Galerie Maria Wettergren](#), [Louise Campbell](#) presented the coloured chaise longue *Slow Relief*.

French designer [Adrien Petrucci](#) is a surprise. The exciting, conceptual collection by this young designer, presented and acquired exclusively by Milan's [Dilmos](#), consists in four wooden sculptures which include a ladder with a hat-shade, a clock-box and a desk with seat in bare wood recomposed in a new form. His *Reformed Objects* was conceived for the Ilse Crawford-curated 2011 Graduation Show of the Design Academy in Eindhoven. "Mass production seems to exist over and above us and pursue its own course," explains Petrucci. "The very essence of the product is increasingly more distant and now all we want is consumption for its own sake. My response comes with *Reformed Objects*, a collection in which I create new objects by stripping existing ones bare. I introduce a sacrificial act that brings out the meaning of the desire and what it involves; sacrifice is a perfect description of the loss and destruction of a prior object that takes place when a new object is created. My process transforms the object from mass-produced and anonymous to unique and profound."

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What Petrucci wants to show with *Reformed Objects* is that it is easy to multiply desires if nothing has to be sacrificed in exchange. This leads to uninhibited consumerism that becomes greed without our realising, he says, what our desires cost society and the environment. A console table gains a mirror but only if the table itself is taken apart and the discarded parts used to make the mirror. Similarly, a table can give rise to a chair but only if you use the splinters of the table to make the chair.



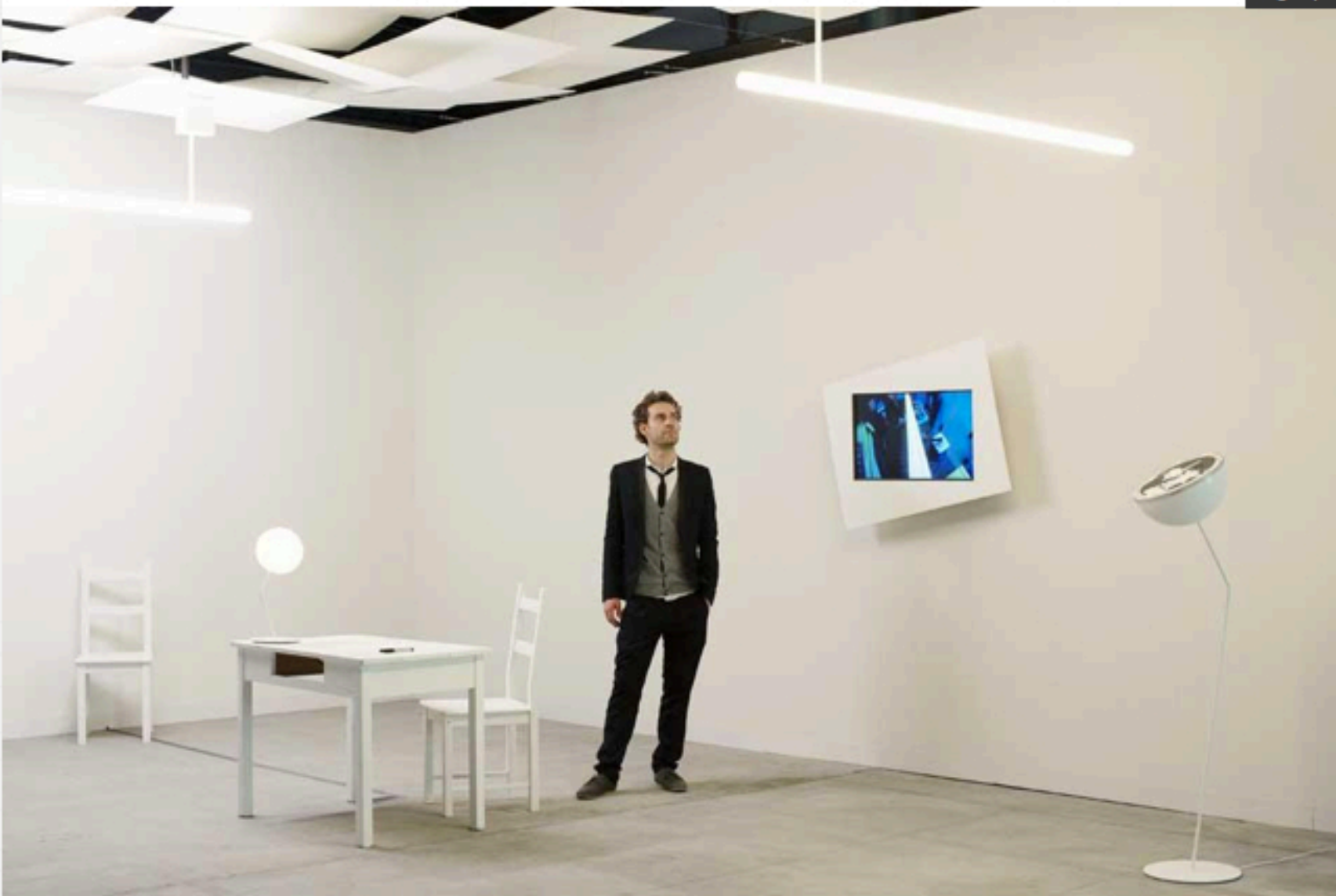
↑ Adrien Petrucci, *Reformed Objects* for Dilmos. Four wooden sculptures which include a ladder with a hat-shade, a clock-box and a desk with seat in bare wood recomposed in a new form

This year's three chosen [Designers of the Future](#) for the W Hotels Award 2012 – Englishman [Tom Foulsham](#), Canadian [Philippe Malouin](#) and German [Markus Kayser](#) – worked under the theme *From Spark to Finish*. As a result, Foulsham plays with balance (with an intimate kiss between a perfectly balanced giraffe and miniature whale in his *Totem*) and transforms it into a variation of a children's merry-go-round, revolves on its own axis with every surrounding breath of air. The designer uses fans to emulate the impact of our breath on the space; he says he would like to try the same concoction with a real, embalmed giraffe – he went looking for one at London's Natural History Museum.



↑ Fredrikson Stallard, *Chess Set* in concrete and bronze for Gallery Libby Sellers

Philippe Malouin's *Daylight* plays with the idea of controlling the daylight entering his London studio. The designer put a contemporary twist on shutters with diverse geometric forms and colour – which he claims not to be too fond of, preferring black and tolerating white. The desired light intensity is achieved manually by moving the wooden slats, handmade by the designer, and with LEDs to reproduce an *artificial day*.



↑ Markus Keyser, one of 2012's Designers of the Future, with his *Lightzeit* LED lamp

Markus Keyser plays with a number of ceiling lamps simplified into a tubular strip, which can be controlled manually via a globe-shaped table lamp: movement is extremely important to light because it changes the way we perceive things, adds Keyser. Berlin-based Israeli Eyal Burstein — winner of the Designer of the Future award in 2010 with [Beta Tank](#) —, now goes solo for Swarovski Crystal Palace with *Beta*, sparkling-seating made of coloured concrete and steel. It looks like the *future* is not so distant for these talents. *Maria Cristina Didero*