

# MODERN

MAGAZINE



**DESIGN**  
**DECORATIVE ARTS**  
**ARCHITECTURE**



# Watch List: Design Stars Under the Radar

## AT AL QUE QUIERE MATTHEW SULLIVAN REINTERPRETS POSTMODERNISM

Los Angeles-based furniture designer Matthew Sullivan may have followed a winding path, but the results were worth the wait. A native of Long Island, New York, he studied fine art at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in D.C. before working at textile brand DesignTex and at the Pace Gallery in Manhattan, and then moving to the West Coast and briefly trying his hand at interior design.

He now creates limited-edition postmodern-inspired furniture and other decorative objects under the moniker Al Que Quiere (“for he who wants it” in Latin, and also the title of a collection by American poet William Carlos Williams). He often collaborates with other designers in other mediums, such as ceramics with local artist Morgan Peck, and typically refers to AQQ as a collective in spirit.

Sullivan, thirty-seven, designs his own pieces and has them fabricated locally. While postmodernism may be experiencing a revival, he is conflicted about that. He traces the movement’s popularity in part to a “zombie-fied and cold” visual aesthetic among the Tumblr set. “The positive thing is that postmodernism has never been dealt with in a good way, because it was so bold—it didn’t get along with things in the room,” he says. “These things are not necessarily easy to live with. But now it’s made it through a couple of decades and is coming out filtered.”

In other words, his works are a more livable interpretation of postmodernism. “I’m really interested in the history of things,” Sullivan says, “in how far Sottsass pushed the handle before it wasn’t a handle anymore. I actually have an aesthetic usefulness that is not present in classic postmodernism. I’m not interested in being too shrill.” Thanks to him, we can relive the movement—and get more use out of it as well. [aqqdesign.com](http://aqqdesign.com)

— Dan Rubinstein



## ARCHITECT BERNARD DUBOIS MAKES THE BANAL INTO BEAUTIFUL

With an artist’s eye, architect Bernard Dubois elevates minimal designs in refreshing ways. His installations, interiors, displays, and furniture—using staples such as concrete and marble—are anything but banal. “I use materials in a very simple way, sometimes naïvely,” says the thirty-three-year-old Brussels-based talent. “The objects I design are usually made of raw materials, showing what they are.”

In collaboration with the architecture firm La Ville Rayée, for Paris’s Galerie Balice Hertling in 2011 Dubois created a continuous geometric desk and shelving unit made entirely from white marble. It stands in the gallery’s front window, both a totemic work of art and a practical piece of office furniture. “It’s about creating a form that is simply beautiful, fun, ambiguous—referring to many different periods and movements in an uninhibited way,” Dubois says.

Earlier this year for Patricia Low Contemporary in Gstaad, Dubois designed both the gallery interior and, again, a marble front desk, but this time using three colors supporting a massive walnut top. “I love to mix precious materials and basic geometrical forms, 1980s and ’90s influences. I like to also think of design, interiors, and architecture as something playful, superficial, and yet useful,” he says.

The designer will next co-curate the Belgian pavilion for June’s Venice Architecture Biennale, titled “Interiors,” where elements of interior architecture from the country’s twentieth-century structures will be pulled out into linear drawings and given life as three-dimensional models. “People can’t afford to tear buildings down, so they adapt them,” Dubois says. “Architecture today is all about interiors. This project will tell us more about vernacular interior practices: needs, forms, and ways to turn these needs into forms.” [bernarddubois.com](http://bernarddubois.com)

— Dan Rubinstein

## FOR HUNTING AND NARUD SCANDINAVIAN TRADITION LEADS TO INNOVATION

As a pair, the Norwegian-born, London-based industrial designers Amy Hunting and Oscar Narud of Hunting and Narud prove the everlasting influence of the environment on Scandinavian design. While each has a studio and career separately, their combined work—which includes products and spaces for the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal College of Art—magnifies and even elevates this influence.

Both designers’ personal works incorporate notions of traditional craft, but they arise through different creative processes. “I think I can be quite abstract, and it can take me a while to get to an actual object in a design process,” Hunting says. “I admire Oscar for being able to think functionally and conceptually at the same time. So while we have different tools to get there, we have similar aesthetics and design values.”

These shared values are evident in their recent Copper Mirror series. The lithe floor mirrors, originally created for a Scandinavian fashion showcase designed by the duo, were expanded upon for an exhibit at Gallery Libby Sellers in London (on view to October 5). The objects pay homage to Norway’s culture and geological resources, using rotatable and reflective, wafer-like copper discs placed atop thin rods with a heavy stone base. “We wanted to create something sculptural, functional, raw, and beautiful at the same time,” Narud says. “We really like the juxtaposition of the light, delicate frame and the heavy, raw stone that keeps it all together.” [huntingandnarud.com](http://huntingandnarud.com)

— Dan Rubinstein

