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DESIGN

Five of the Best Young Designers

Meet the up-and-comers in the world of design, who are ready to take the crown from the likes of Phillippe Starck

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By HELEN KIRWAN-TAYLOR

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DESIGN IS A BIT LIKE Hollywood. Everyone knows the stars by their first names; the rest continue to work in semi-obscurity. "It's extremely hard for anyone new to break into the industry," says Italian designer and architect Rodolfo Dordoni, famous for his best-selling Lumiere light for Foscarini, which is sold world-wide. "Even at my age, I still find it tricky and disappointing when a product doesn't get taken up by a company or sells poorly."

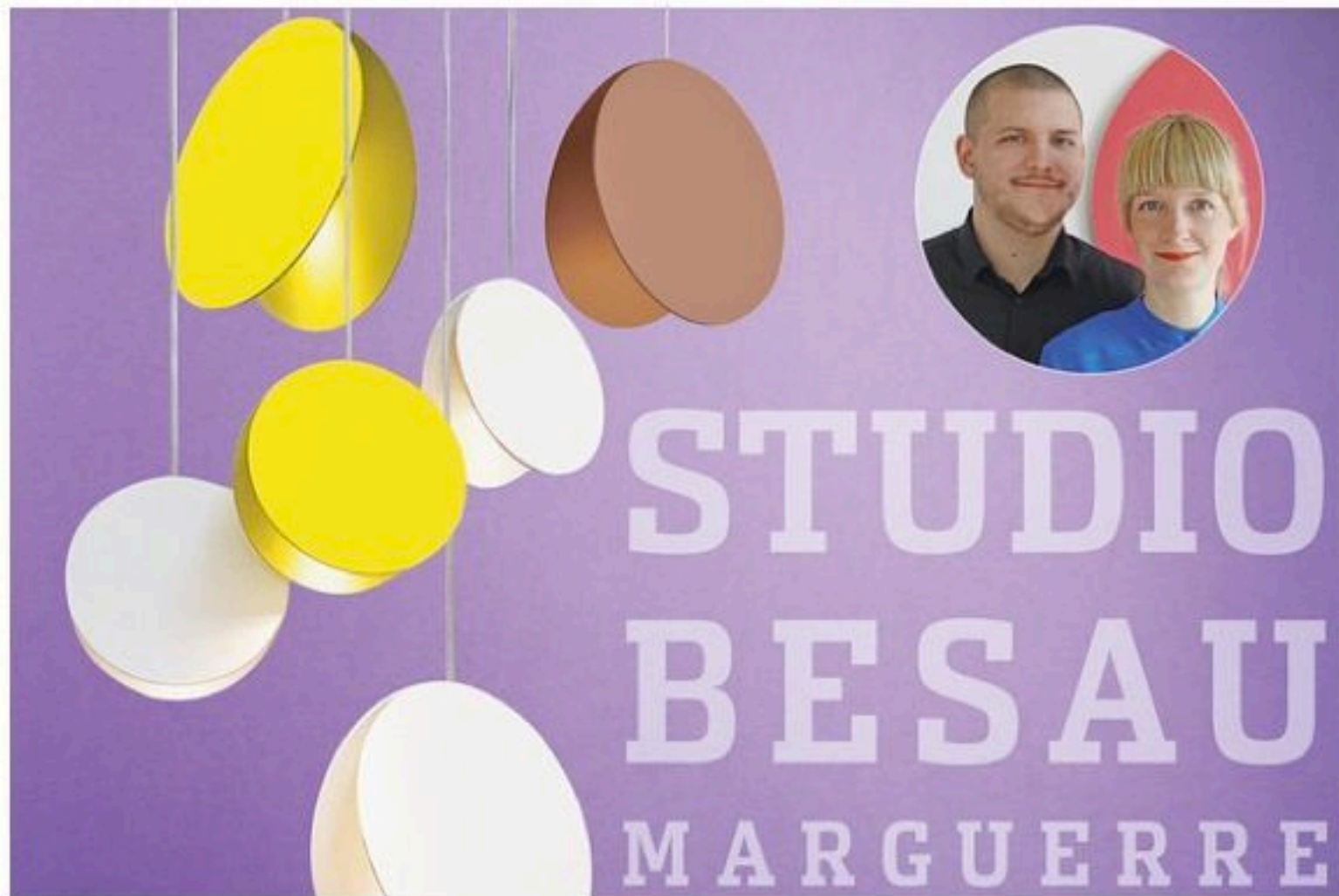
That said, young international designers are slowly making headway into an industry dominated by giants such as Philippe Starck and Patrizia Urquiola. The design industry often scores a massive hit with one product then continues to churn it out in different colors or fabrics year after year. This year at the Milan Furniture Fair, for example, every light and chair seemed to be in gold—this season's color; last year the exact same lights and chairs were displayed in white or in a clear finish. New designers offer a fresh perspective, one which still has its roots in craft. Here, a look at five.



Constance Guisset is a 37-year-old French designer. *Ribon*

Constance Guisset

The 37-year-old French designer already works with big-name brands like Molteni, straddling the worlds of industrial design, stage design and craft with a great deal of humor. Though she has created dozens of products, from lighting to jewelry as well as installations for fashion houses like Ferragamo and travel accessories for companies like Louis Vuitton, Ms. Guisset made it with her Vertigo Lamp (produced by Petite Friture in 2010), a fiberglass fixture that moves gently with the air currents from the room (£780 for a large black version, heals.co.uk). The designer is highly artistic—enough to produce exhibits for Paris's Les Arts Decoratifs—and on the cusp of entering the big league. constanceguisset.com



Eva Marguerre and Marcel Besau are Hamburg-based designers, ages 30 and 33 respectively. *Ingmar Kurth; Brita Sönnichsen (portrait)*

Eva Marguerre and Marcel Besau // Studio Besau Marguerre

This is Eva Marguerre and Marcel Besau's year. The Hamburg-based designers, 30 and 33 respectively, recently struck gold with their new Nord lighting collection for E15, one of the industry's newer powerhouses. "It was a long process that accidentally came about because of an internship in which Eva was introduced to [E15 partner] Philipp Mainzer," says Mr. Besau. The first prototype for E15 failed miserably. The second, Nord, was an instant smash hit. The collection of lights made from brushed copper powder coated steel discs (in white, yellow and copper) is noteworthy because of its sheer simplicity. Based on the moon in the night sky, the collection of pendant, floor and wall lights are also surprisingly decorative. *From €220; besau-marguerre.de*



Nata Janberidze and Keti Toloraia are Georgian designers, both 32. *Anna Tsitsishvili / Sandro Takaishvili*

Nata Janberidze and Keti Toloraia // Rooms

The young Georgian designers, both 32, work mainly in the interior decoration sector on hotels, restaurants and homes. Their work is unabashedly elegant and decorative but it also strikes a chord. Their Embroider Blue stool/bench/table from 2010, made of brass and cloth, is rough and slick at the same time. But it's their Medallion Mirror (€4,500), inspired by the old honor medallions seen in the flea markets of Tbilisi, that has made the design industry take the duo seriously. It takes only one product to propel young designers such as Ms. Janberidze and Ms. Toloraia from the shopping pages of magazines like House & Garden to collector status. From now on, the two women can expect their work to be looked at through the lens of art rather than furniture. rooms.ge



Alvaro Catalán de Ocón is a 33-year-old Spaniard. *Alvaro Catalán de Ocón*

Alvaro Catalán de Ocón

The 33-year-old Spaniard is the best example of design's two worlds. His particular focus is mixing the artisanal and the handmade with the industrial. Perhaps it's the fact he has a degree from London's Central Saint Martins as well as a business degree from Complutense University of Madrid (Mr. Catalán de Ocón is a great salesman), but his is a name that will be bandied around much more in the future. Most newsworthy are his Home/Office chairs, a collaboration between Vitra and some very skilled petit point masters (needlepoint on a fine canvas) in Spain. Mr. Catalán de Ocón literally tattoos Eames office chairs with extravagantly decorative floral embroidery. Though expensive, this is as close as design gets to couture. €3,800; catalandeocon.com



Anton Alvarez is a 33-year-old Swedish-Chilean designer. *Gustav Almestål / Gallery Libby Sellers*

Anton Alvarez

The 33-year-old Swedish-Chilean designer, a graduate of London's Royal College of Art, straddles the world of design and art—so much so that he is already represented by London gallerist Libby Sellers and is making his way to Design Miami Basel in June. Mr. Alvarez's Thread Wrapping Machine, originally designed as part of his Master's thesis, is an elaborate, homemade spinning machine controlled by a pump. After much development, it is now able to create all sorts of objects by binding different components together using thousands of meters of glue-coated thread. What is noteworthy here is the combination of high and low technology and an almost random manufacturing process that churns out polished stools, benches, lamps, tables and chairs. The end effect is colorful and slick enough to appear industrially made. Fitting into the Tom Dixon mold (the famous industrial designer was determined to make his own products in his early career rather than outsource to foreign manufacturers as many now do), Mr. Alvarez is definitely on the design radar.

Wrapped chairs from £900; antonalvarez.com