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Clerkenwell Design Week: Hunting & Narud FIVE

The London-based Norwegian designers talk us through their design for the FIVE group exhibition



The American hardwood Export Council have teamed up with East London design collective OKAY Studio at this year's Clerkenwell Design Week, marking the festival's fifth anniversary with an exhibition celebrating five types of American hardwood: tulipwood, ash, hard maple, red oak and cherry.

Entitled FIVE, designers Mathias Hahn, Liliana Ovalle, Ed Swan, Andrew Haythornthwaite and Peter Marigold, and Norwegian London-based design duo Hunting and Narud have designed objects for the exhibition at **The SCIN Gallery** on Old Street. We spoke to Amy Hunting and Oscar Narud at the exhibition's opening.

What have you created for the exhibition?

Amy: We've designed a series of glass and wood tables, called Apex Tables. We really wanted to find a material that could highlight and complement the grains and textures of all the five series of American hardwoods.



We chose glass because we could use it as a container for each individual species, whilst adding colour as well. What we've done is flip the traditional role of the glass; usually it's used as the more delicate and decorative material, whereas here it is the container and the main structural support.

The reason the design is called the Apex Table is because the tip – or apex – of the cone is the only place where the wood touches the glass directly. We've tried to push the design as far as we can in terms of size and the dimensions the craftsman could push the band-blown glass as well.

In terms of the exhibition as a whole, was there a symbiosis between your individual projects?

Oscar: **OKAY Studio** is like an umbrella; we're all individual studios and designers, so we all have a different approach to the project. As a collection, I think it's come together quite nicely. They are all very different pieces, but all show off the wood in quite a good way.

Amy: We worked independently, but got together for informal discussions, though we didn't sit down put together a strategy. It's been very free in terms of the brief. They basically said, do whatever you want – using American hardwood.

With such a broad brief, how did you decide how to tackle the project?

Amy: Sometimes it's really good to have such an open brief when the material is set; you're naturally limited in some sense. We set another brief for ourselves – to find another material it could work with, to find a balance of materials.

Is glass a material you enjoy working with, outside of this project?

Oscar: Actually, it's the first time that we've worked with glass, so it's new territory for us. It complements the wood, and it's definitely a material that we would like to work more with.

Will these designs go into production?

Amy: They are one offs right now – they have been produced for the exhibition. But we would like to explore further.

Oscar: It's a project we'd really like to develop – I don't know how production friendly it is just yet, but it is certainly something we could pursue down a gallery route. It's not limited to this collection. We'd like to try out other colours of stains and glass, and also, this is the 'first run', so it would be good to get a feel for them and see which ones really work better, which ones need to be altered a bit, which details...

FIVE is open to the public during Clerkenwell Design Week until 22 May at The SCIN Gallery, 27 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HL. **Hunting and Narud** will be taking part in the 'AHEC & OKAY Studio discuss FIVE' talk on Thursday. [Click for ticket details](#)