

New + Notable 2008



SILENT WHISPER www.materia.se

Researching noise in a preschool must be like studying feathers on a chicken farm, but for six months, that was Swedish designer Sigrid Strömgren's day job. In Sweden, it seems, hearing well has become a matter of intense concern: Studies show that up to 15 percent of the population suffers from tinnitus, and researchers believe such injuries can start as early as preschool.

In 2005, after finishing her bachelor's degree in design, Strömgren worked with noise researchers at Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Gothenburg, who assigned her to map noise sources in a preschool and to look at the provisional ideas teachers had come up with to try and muffle them. She found, among other

inventions, modified tennis balls covering the feet of chairs. "Lots of creative, but not always beautiful or functional, solutions," she says.

Two years later, for a master's project at the University of Gothenburg's School of Design and Crafts, Strömgren funneled that research into generating ideas for grown-up furniture with "integrated noise reduction," intended to stop sound at its source without any awkward felt appliqué. The result was a line of laminate tables and stools called Silent Whisper, which have since been put into production by the Swedish company Materia. The table cuts the clatter of knives, forks, and china in half (by about 10 dB) compared to what you'd expect from ordinary laminated surfaces.

In developing Silent Whisper, Strömgren tested more than 50 material combinations for their sound-absorption properties, as well as for their durability, flexibility, and ease of cleaning. "Soft materials are very quiet, but not so functional as tabletops," she explains. "A cotton table would be very bad to spill coffee on." Eventually she settled on a high-pressure laminate top containing a shock-absorbing core. But as for exactly what those elements comprise, Strömgren is rather, well, hush-hush about the matter: Materia is now seeking a patent for the design; \$625–\$995.

— BRADFORD MCKEE



live



The Israeli-born, London-based Shay Alkalay rightfully noted that dresser drawers look sexier when hanging slightly ajar. So for Established & Sons, the designer created **Stack**, a modular, multicolored system of floating units that open from either side. Two sizes (eight or thirteen drawers) can be shuffled and shifted like blocks, making for a never-ending game of Jenga with your belongings. Available at Matter. From \$3,750.

www.mattermatters.com or www.establishedandsons.com

Chroma_Key is Minale-Maeda's second fabric-covered furniture collection to be picked up by Droog, but the Rotterdam-based duo has traded the faux wood grain of last year's Survival Furniture for a bizarre blue-and-white moiré meant to frustrate computer monitors and camera lenses. Weirder still are the forms of the collection's chair, cabinet, table, bench, and lamp: Standard frames seem to have been chopped up and reassembled improperly, and items that look nested are actually inseparable. Contact manufacturer for prices. www.droogdesign.nl





***Win Me**
go to id-mag.com



Lladró's surreal [Naturfantastic](#) collection imagines what it might look like if plants, animals, and bacteria could survive a group hug. Candles emerge from clamshells snuggled with barnacles and amoebas, while an Art Deco-style vase is topped with a tight bouquet of geometric flora that look plucked from another planet.

From \$750.
www.lladro.com

As stylish to store as it is to show off, Nils Frederking's [F2](#) folding table for Ligne Roset has three articulated panels and a chromed-steel base that collapse into a neat 3½-inch-thick stack. The surface can be finished in white lacquer (\$2,720) or walnut veneer (\$2,975).
www.ligne-roset-usa.com



For those embarrassed by clutter—or by their addiction to trashy romance novels—the [Bar Code](#) bookshelf system by Italian company Bross is essentially a secret library. Vertical units slide along a horizontal brace, creating access points to interior storage. Because only the profile of each case is visible from the outside, Bross has begun using that space for artistic purposes, including this new map-like graphic pattern by Enzo Berti (left). Contact manufacturer for price.

www.bross-italy.com



As young Swedish designers often do, Beckmans grad Katarina Häll based her [Save](#) collection on a personal story: a memory of her grandfather prying up a floorboard in his bathroom to reveal a stash of letters and trinkets. The colorful pine planks that crisscross the front of Häll's bureau, closet, desk, and stool double as compartments for your own hidden treasures. Contact designer for price. www.katarinahall.se



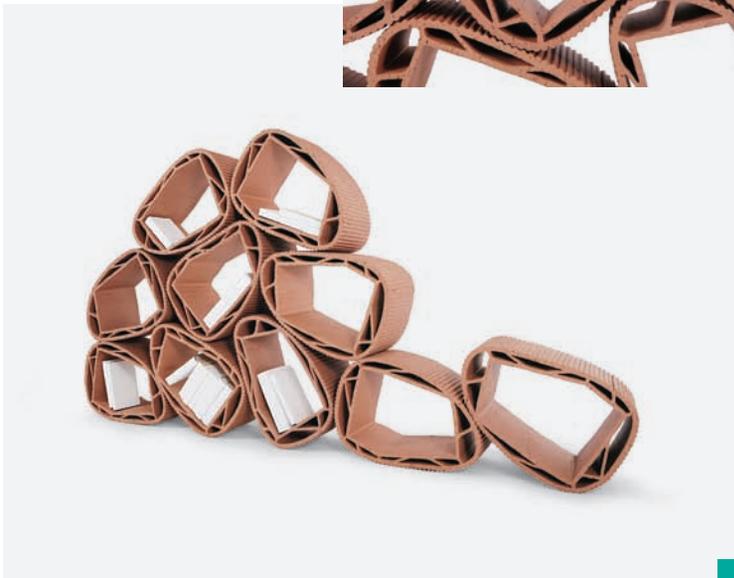
The boulder-shaped cubbies that make up Roche Bobois' [Fossile](#) storage system stack without any bolts or brackets, but this is no house of cards—the modules are rough, extruded terracotta cut with grooves on the outside, so they lock together naturally and are virtually tumble-proof.

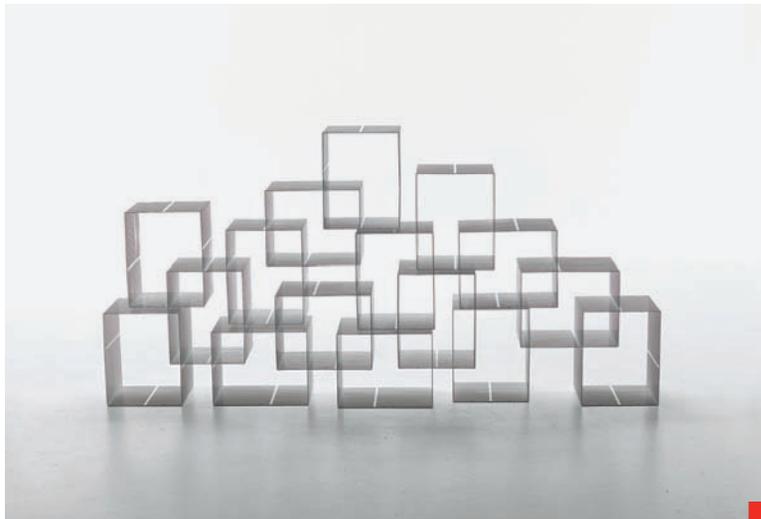
Designed by Mostapha El Oulhani, Jérôme Garzon, and Fred Sionis, Fossile won a 2008 Project Assistance grant from VIA before being picked up by the French manufacturer. From \$225 per unit.

www.roke-bobois.com

The Australian skincare line [Aesop](#)'s retail designs are inspired by everything from old New Yorkers to Louis Poulsen lights, cubism, egg-custard tarts, and good red wine. This year, the brand debuted three new interiors:

in Melbourne (its temporary fit-out constructed entirely of recycled cardboard); Adelaide (boasting a waveform ceiling in recycled glass); and London (pictured, a Victorian-era restoration by Studio Ilse Crawford that adds warmth with a mix of bronze, ceramic, iron, and tweed). 91 Mount Street, London +44 (0) 207 409 2358
www.aesop.net.au or
www.studioilse.com



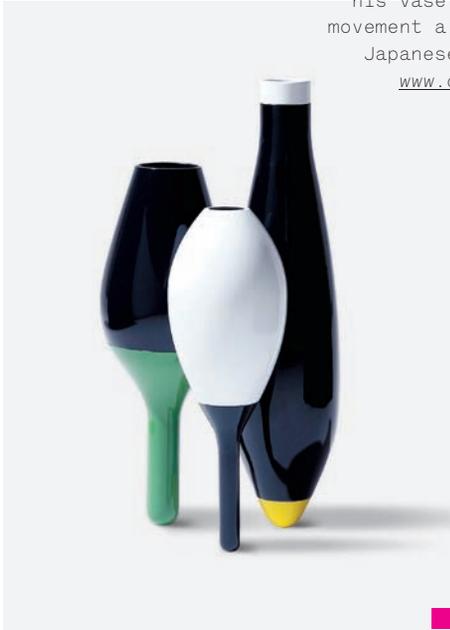


Milan's Galleria Post Design not only distributes Memphis furniture still in production, it also commissions fittingly cartoony new editions, like Markus Benesch's resin and wood [Cut](#) sideboard. With two display slots atop some well-concealed drawers and shelving, Cut debuted this year with matching marble tables and a silk-screened mirror; \$17,105. www.memphis-milano.it

Philippe Nigro's [Cross Unit](#) is a cloud of delicate white-wire cubes whose corners slot together to form any number of configurations (tiny clips keep them in place). Milan-based Gruppo Sintesi snatched up the shelves after last year's VIA showcase of young French talent; Nigro has since gone on to work with ENO and Ligne Roset. Contact manufacturer for price. www.gruppo-sintesi.com

Of all the designs unearthed in the recent revivals craze, none is more historically transcendent than the late Shiro Kuramata's 1980s furniture, newly reissued by Living Divani. [Chair 01](#) has a chrome-plated steel frame with a cantilevered back, and its curved, looping arms are echoed in the spaghetti legs of Kuramata's steel-and-glass [Table 01](#). Chair 01 from \$2,610; Table 01 is \$2,700. www.livingdivani.it

François Azambourg's three-legged [PO/0803](#) vase for Cappellini has a cartoonish style similar to Jaime Hayón's work, but while the Spaniard is inspired by fellow countryman Antoni Gaudí, Azambourg credits his vase's aesthetic to a movement a bit further afield: Japanese Manga; \$3,387. www.cappellini.it



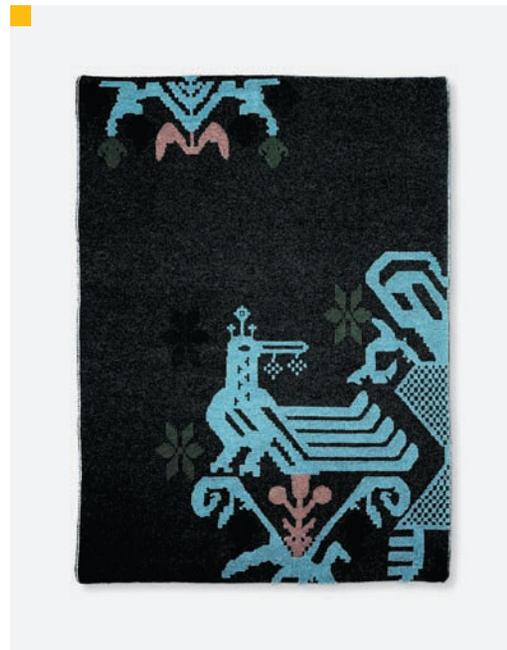
Facets may be trendy, but newcomers Voonwong & Bensonsaw have pushed the motif beyond mere aesthetics: Inside the smoked-glass frame of their retro-futuristic [Kopitable](#) for DecodeLondon, a series of overlapping mirrored planes not only manipulate light in an intriguing way, they also create pockets of storage; \$3,600. www.decodeLondon.com



Patricia Urquiola's [Sardinian](#) carpet collection for Moroso adapts folk motifs (flowers, peacocks, horses, griffins) in asymmetrical patterns and bold colors derived from natural dyes. The wool carpets, woven on the Mediterranean island on traditional looms, are available in four designs in both light and dark palettes; \$9,527. www.morosousa.com

Philip Edis's [Authority System](#) cabinet, chest of drawers, and matching carpet take their design from bombproof high-security architecture. The furniture's dark gray, slightly faceted doors look like they could stop a bullet, but don't try it—they're only MDF; \$5,000 for the chest of drawers. www.philipedis.com

Brussels-based designer Alain Gilles's [Tectonic](#) side tables for Bonaldo are perfect for compulsive rearrangers: Their slotted wire tops create crosshatched patterns as you twist, turn, and angle them around each other, although they do limit what the tables can actually be used for. Books: OK. Your chopstick collection: Nope! From \$214. www.bonaldo.it

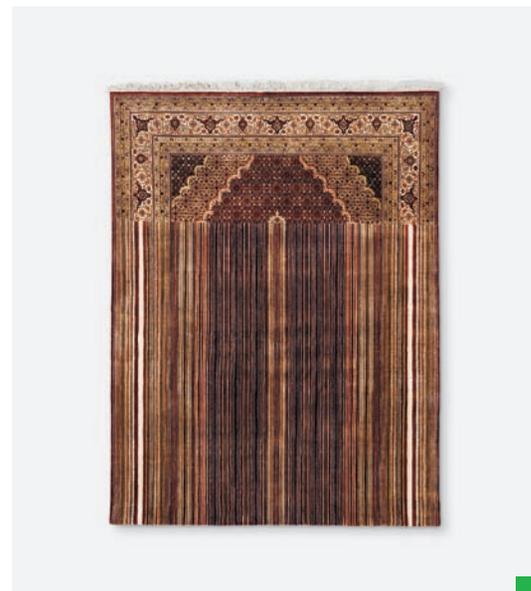


LOUISE BILLGERT (AUTHORITY SYSTEM)

To create its [Twine Table](#) for Casamania, Sweden's Wis Design "sewed" painted steel wire through button-like holes in an MDF top, then looped the metal back on itself to form a structural base. From \$570. www.wisdesign.se or www.casamania.it

Though the parallelepipeds of Piero Lissoni's [Wireframe](#) tables for Glas Italia seem unstable, rest assured that the neon-tinted edges of each tempered-glass sheet are securely glued. After a few drinks, they may even look unskewed. From \$2,011. www.glasitalia.com

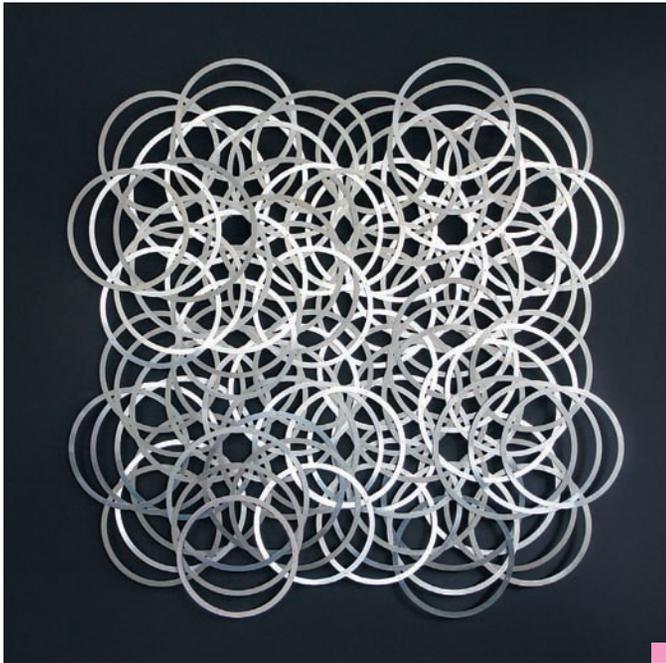
A third of Richard Hutten's [Play With Tradition](#) limited-edition wool rug for the Milan-based I+I's Strawberry Fields collection has a pattern familiar to any Nepalese weaver, while the rest drifts off into fuzzy pinstripes. Hutten says he based the design on an antique Persian carpet, "almost the only non-contemporary object in my home"; \$10,330. www.i-and-i.it



Sydney, Australia-based Korban/Flaubert studied the interference patterns of rippling water to create [Polar Screen](#), its latest furniture piece inspired by naturally occurring geometries. The screen's slim metal rings are layered to create semidynamic reflected-light patterns, so you get the water without the wet. Available in custom sizes. Contact designers for price. www.korbanflaubert.com.au

While working on a previous project, Stockholm's Matti Klenell happened upon a cluster of variously sized hollow metal spheres and resolved to find a way to use them. The idea for his David Design [Orb](#) coat rack followed naturally: "I see it as a kind of abstract flower stem," he says. "That the knobs are very gentle to your clothes came as a plus." Available through Hightower; \$795. www.hightoweraccess.com or www.daviddesign.se

No, that's not the remnants of yesterday's Trix, it's the [Water Clock](#) by Japan's Kyoei Design. The little balls are the hands, pulled around by a neodymium magnet in the base. Float the red ball in a glass and the white one in a dish and they'll bob in circles, one telling the hour and the other ticking off minutes. Contact designers for price. www.kyoei-ltd.co.jp



Designed by the Mexican collective NEL for Nanimarquina, the [Global Warming](#) carpet represents the devastating consequences of climate change in three dimensions: A felt polar bear stands forlornly on a shrinking ice floe in an azure sea of hand-tufted New Zealand wool. From \$1,420. www.nanimarquina.com

Swedish design house Blå Station molds, tints, and stacks birch disks for its colorful toy-like [Babel](#) tables, designed by Fredrik Mattson. Bases in standard or custom heights can have monochrome, graded, or rainbow combos underneath their smooth, lacquered tops. From \$712. www.blastation.se





Cappellini partnered with Tai Ping and a roster of star designers for its [Magic Carpet](#) collection. The group of 10 projects includes Fabio Novembre's Pure Italy—a rug-size facsimile of a fabric-care label, which unabashedly advertises its material: 100 percent silk; \$4,448. www.cappellini.it

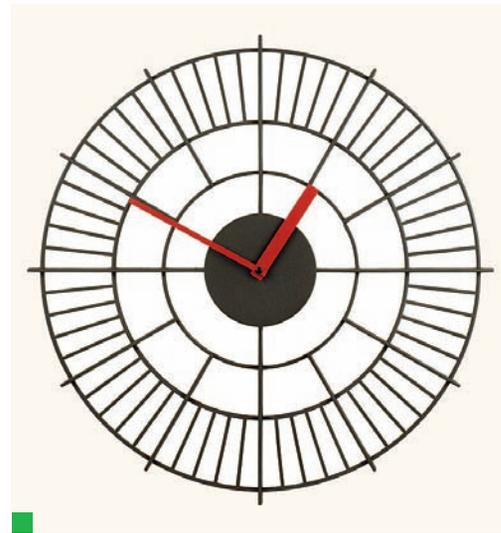
At the Turkish presentation in Milan this year, architect Serhan Gürkan—a founding member of Istanbul's GMG IN/EX—showed origami-style bent-metal furniture. But the little-known gem in his portfolio is [Golden Ratio](#), a system of wood shelves with nested acrylic drawers that conform to the ancient mathematical principle. Contact designer for price. www.gmqinex.com

Belgian designer and recent Eindhoven graduate Maarten De Ceulaer has traveled extensively in India, hence the *Darjeeling Limited* vibe of his [Pile of Suitcases](#) armoire for Casamania. Vintage-style leather trunks become cabinets for storing all the things you might have taken with you in the days before airline baggage fees. From \$6,956. www.casamania.it

As Atelier Blink, Belgian designers Emilie Lecouturier and Céline Poncelet restyle familiar products: an octopus-like beanbag chair made from recycled jeans, for example, or their wool and polyimide [Brocante de Salon](#) rug, which presents a photorealistic image of a street cluttered with flea-market crockery. While an unexpected sight in the living room, it's a common landscape in the firm's native Brussels. Available at D'Apostrophe; \$1,395-\$4,920. www.dapostrophe.net or www.atelierblink.com

Rejoining forces with Authentics, the German company that pioneered the use of translucent polypropylene more than 25 years ago, Constantin and Laurene Boym have revitalized the restructured company with their new product, [Track Clock](#). Like a trusty plastic stopwatch blown up into stark, 18-inch wall graphics, it's a striking reminder that time is a-wastin'. Available at Vessel; \$150. www.vessel.com or www.authentics-shop.de

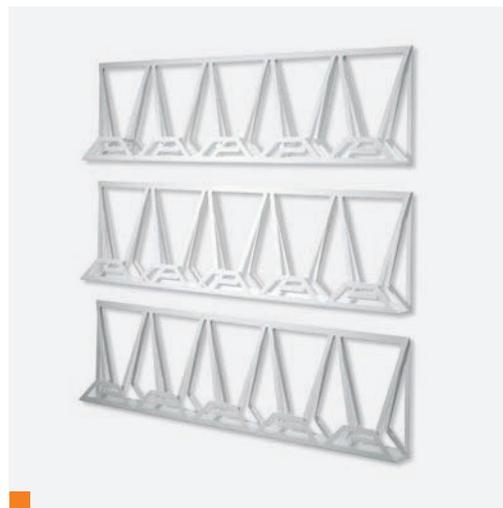
It looks like a door handle and works like a light dimmer: Belgian innovator Alain Berteau's [Slide](#) faucet can be controlled with one finger by sliding the top panel backwards (a little for cold water, a lot for hot). Perfect for the iPhone generation. From \$559. www.rvb.be



Spain's Inbani Design puts a colorful spin on sinks and storage with its newest collection: [Tambo](#) by Sergio Rocas, which includes a Componibili-esque wall-mounted sink with an integrated storage unit lined in hot pink. Contact manufacturer for price. www.inbani.com



The Scandinavian designer Swedish Ninja—whose secret identity is the mild-mannered Maria Gustavsson—found inspiration in the Erector Set-like cranes of defunct shipyards in Malmö, Sweden, when creating her [Xhibit](#) magazine racks. The powder-coated steel units come in two sizes, for displaying three or five periodicals; \$170-\$235. www.mitabprod.se



Touted as the quietest line of Miele dishwashers yet, the [G 2002 La Perla series](#) may also be the smartest. The machines check room temperature to calculate water temperature, rinse-aid distribution, and drying time, and their doors pop open at strategic moments to aid in drying without wasting energy. A “turbo” feature speeds up wash times by 10 to 15 percent, and the brushed-metal surfaces resist scratches and smudges. Contact manufacturer for price. www.miele.com



Pivoting, flexing, and articulating its cylindrical form into dozens of positions, Kohler's [Karbon](#) faucet makes retractable sidespray hoses irrelevant, providing hands-free washing of plates and filling of tall vases with no wasted drops. Carbon-fiber section casings add corrosion-free flash, while a recessed valve controls the type of spray; \$990.

www.us.kohler.com

Waffle grids are molded in MDF for the wire-base collection of [Ajours](#) ("openwork") coffee-and-end tables Normal Studio developed for ENO.

The tabletops keep their looks right through a party, since crumbs and spills fall straight through; \$328-\$398.

www.enostudio.net

Like his famed radiator for Droog, Dutch designer Joris Laarman's [WirePod](#) for Artecnic unfurls its gray limbs into a decorative pattern. The four-outlet power cord is the first in a series of designs by the Los Angeles-based company meant to transform electrical products from necessary eyesores into covetable interior objects. Contact manufacturer for price.

www.artecnicainc.com



***Win Me**
go to id-mag.com





Patchwork might seem counterintuitive to Ligne Roset's modern, streamlined aesthetic, but the company's smartly pieced-together [Courchevel](#) rug is an exception. Square cowhide tiles, solid brown in the center and spotted on the periphery, unite to suggest a pixelated supernova, albeit in a more earthly material; \$2,310. www.ligne-roset-usa.com

Interwoven lengths of solid oak lend extra refinement to the [Foxtrot](#) table designed by U.K. cabinetmakers Sarah Kay and Andrea Stemmer for SCP. The table has an oak-veneer top and is available in its natural color or with a wenge-wood stain. From \$1,050. www.scp.co.uk

Norayr Khachatryan's [N-7](#) table for Casamania is aluminum origami—two hooked legs fold down from opposite corners of an angular top, lending it an intriguingly awkward stance. (Khachatryan says the backward-bending legs remind him of a deer's.) The N-7 comes in white and red, but for the full stealth-bomber vibe, opt for black; \$5,275. www.casamania.it

Under the creative direction of Estudio Mariscal, Valencia's Uno Design debuted at this year's Milan Furniture Fair with collections by Emiliana Design, Lagranja, Enrique Martí, and U.K.-based El Último Grito, whose stand-out piece was [Add Up](#), a kind of surface supercontinent that mashes together clear or opaque tops in rectangles, squares, or disks with protruding frames. Contact manufacturer for price. www.uno-design.com

