

# dwell



## These Are the Best Things We Saw at the Miami Design Fairs This Year

Dwell's editor-in-chief and an intrepid photographer went to Design Miami, Alcova, and other design events happening around town during Art Basel Miami Beach. Here are some highlights.

Text by [William Hanley](#)

Throughout the year, we dispatch Dwell's editors to different design events around the world, including [Salone del Mobile](#) in Milan, [NYCxDesign](#) in New York, and the brand new, confusingly named [Design Miami Paris](#) (in Paris) to find the best new furniture, lighting, and design ideas out there. This week, photographer [James Jackman](#) and I headed to [Design Miami](#) (in Miami) for its annual hometown fair. The show has run alongside the

venerable Art Basel Miami Beach since its inception 19 years ago, with a roster of galleries representing the most vaunted designers in the world.

Of course, Miami Basel week notoriously attracts satellite events courting well-heeled collectors in town as well as thousands of other art-inclined people. This year, they ranged from genteel talks at the fairs to a costumed wrestling match (seriously) underneath a freeway overpass, where the prize was a championship belt improbably designed by the eminent Marc Newson. (I've informed my friends that we're doing this instead of karaoke on our birthdays from now on.)

One of the latest additions to the Basel-adjacent calendar is the emerging designer-focused Alcovà, an exhibition that runs alongside Salone del Mobile in Milan every spring, debuting its first U.S. edition with some 35 designers selected by founders Valentina Ciuffi and Joseph Grima.

Canvassing it all, this is some of the best design work James and I saw.



**Our first stop was Alcova, which got its name from the beautifully crumbling spaces it takes over in Milan every year. Its first stateside edition was held at the appropriately midcentury-shabby Selina Gold Dust Motel.**

Photo © James Jackman



**The joy of Alcova is always slogging through a lot of half-baked work to find undiscovered gems, and the rooms at the Gold Dust were no exception.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Here, I'm peeking at a work by furniture designer Lukas Wegwerth and textile designer Corinna Dehn.**

Photo © James Jackman



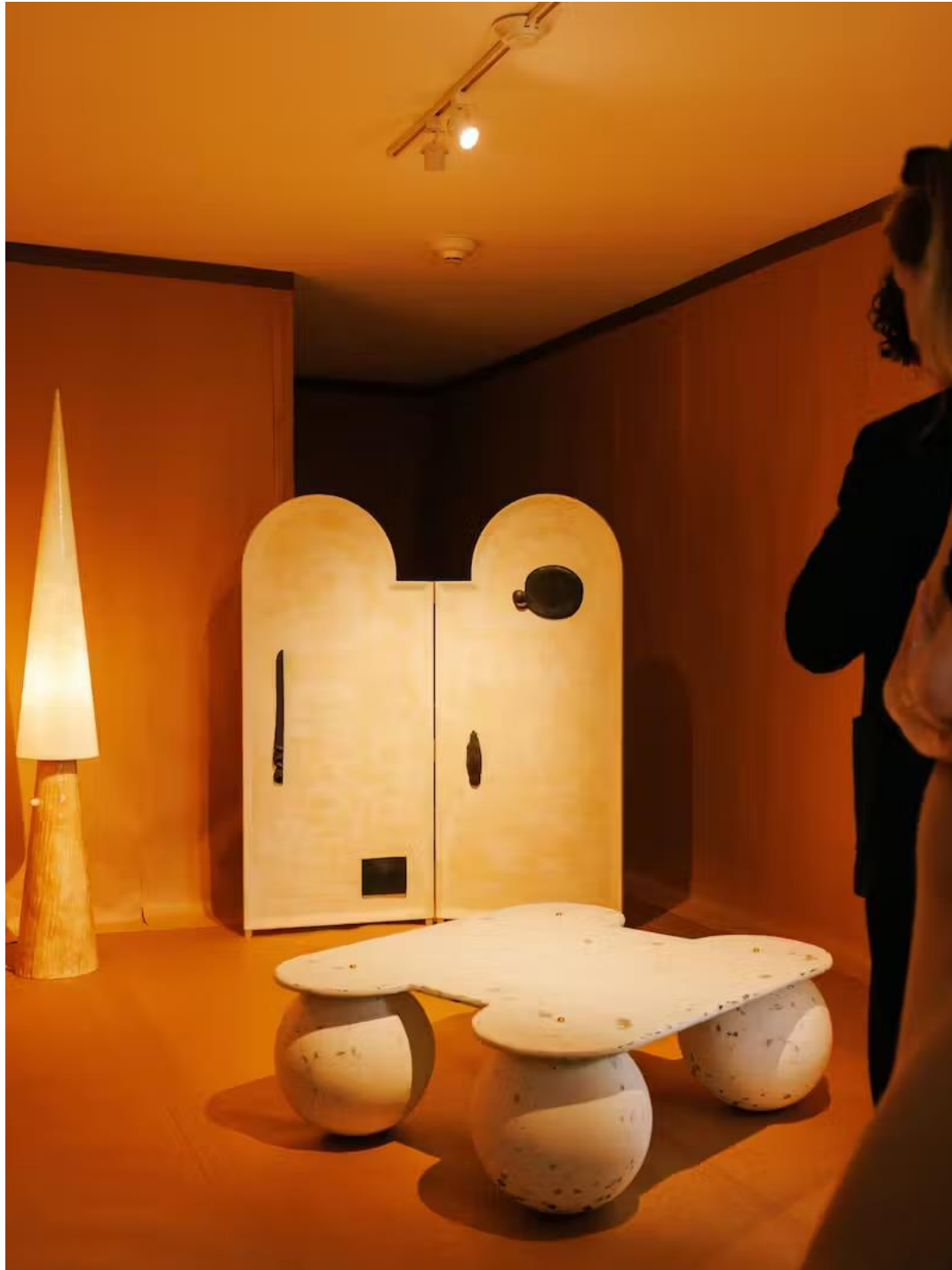
**It's made from pastel-painted wooden petals, a form based on roofing shingles, arranged on an armature. They look like fish scales in an undulating pattern. Scaled-up versions of their work also appeared at Design Miami.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Many of the best works were by Dwell 24 alums, including London-based Dean Norton, who was included in our most recent roundup of emerging designers.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Brazilian studio Palma was also on our annual emerging designer list this year.**

Photo © James Jackman





**Their perfectly pointed lamps were some of our favorite discoveries as we were scouting for new talent. It was great to finally see them in person.**

Photo © James Jackman



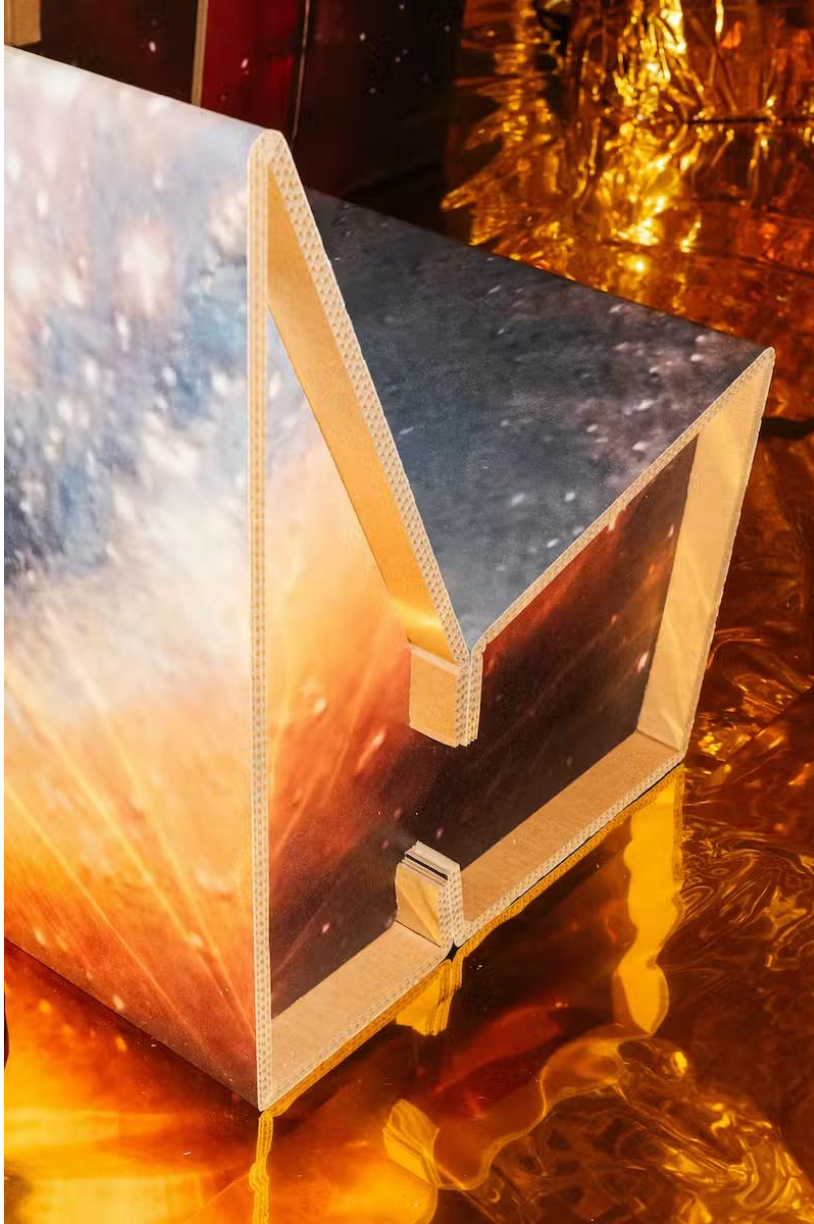
**The Danish duo behind Natural Material Studio presented lighting wrapped in bio-plastic membranes made from pulverized chalk and other recycled materials.**

Photo © James Jackman



**The installation with the most, um, valences was by Marijke Jorritsma who works for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, designers Daniel Perlin and John Vieweg, and technologist KamranV. Here Perlin, a prolific experience designer, explains what's going on in their room wrapped in space shuttle-ready gold foil.**

Photo © James Jackman



**I'm going to get this wrong, but my best summary is that the piece is a vinyl record studded with space rocks. It contains work by 20 musicians meant to be played through four speakers simultaneously. The limited-edition record arrives flat-packed in panels printed with images of invented galaxies. The packaging can be assembled into a chair on which you're meant to sit while listening to the record. My description may or may not be totally accurate, but I do know that proceeds from sales of the work will go to the independent nonprofit radio station, **Dublab**.**

Photo © James Jackman



**In stark contrast to a scruffy motel, Design Miami represents the polished and posh world of one-off and small-edition contemporary work and rare historical pieces, the latter of which are, in my opinion, always the highlight. James and I hit the aisles to find some favorites.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Philadelphia's Wexler Gallery brought a stunning terra-cotta piece by Malene Djenaba Barnett seen against the back wall here.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Mumbai gallery æquō made their debut at the fair with contemporary furniture made by traditional artisans in India.**

Photo © James Jackman

æquō



**This credenza was made by glazing copper sheets and firing them in an open fire, giving them a rich, unpredictable finish.**

Photo © James Jackman





**The always awesome Mexico gallery AGO projects had a great booth that included a table by Rafael Triboli and ceramics by Maura Wrigt.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Textiles by Leanne Shapton made to look like blankets for moving furniture might be the best things I saw all week.**

Photo © James Jackman



**One of the most surprising pieces was at Les Ateliers Courbet, a bed by Maine woodworker and stonecutter Ethan Stebbins made from wooden planks set into chiseled rocks.**

Photo © James Jackman



**A 1990s love seat designed by Hervé Baley cut a sharp profile alongside some of the designer's earlier work at Magen H.**

Photo © James Jackman



**The Future Perfect presented work by many of the designers they represent in a dramatic, high contrast display.**

Photo © James Jackman



**New York's Superhouse brought a selection of pieces by seemingly every designer they work with as well.**

Photo © James Jackman



**A standout was a 1970s chest by Elizabeth Browning Jackson.**

Photo © James Jackman



**Finally, Marta, a Los Angeles gallery that might have the most exciting program out there right now, showed large metal works by Nigerian designer Nifemi Marcus-Bello.**

Photo © James Jackman





**Look for more of his pieces in the January/February issue of Dwell when we pay a visit to his Lagos studio.**

Photo © James Jackman