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A trash bag sofa, giant fairy tale figures and the Orient Express highlight Design Miami

BY SIOBHAN MORRISSEY

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Artist Harry Nuriev, left, talks with Dina Darina next to his piece “The Trash Bag Sofa” at Design Miami. MATIAS J. OCNER mocner@miamiherald.com

Agatha Christie fans and anyone into the romance of the rails will be thrilled with this year’s Design Miami, which heralds the relaunch of the Orient Express. Visitors strap on a headset and experience a virtual reality trip on the sumptuous train to Istanbul, complete with Asian music playing in the background.

The star of Christie’s iconic “Murder on the Orient Express” — the rail cars with their Lalique glass and marquetry panels inlaid with gold and ebony — had mysteriously disappeared after the luxury train company

shuttered roughly half a century ago. A worldwide search began in 2015 to find the missing train cars, which were eventually tracked to an open field on the border between Belarus and Poland. Today, the French hotelier, Accor Group, is reimagining the train, combining the grandeur of the past with contemporary upgrades.

Plans for the newly designed Presidential Suite aboard the Orient Express (X/04) can be viewed for the first time by visitors to the annual design fair across the street from the Miami Beach Convention Center. Renowned French architect Maxime d'Angeac designed everything, right down to the doorknobs and the color of the lighting. The original cars had 10 cabins and a communal bathroom; the newer version has three cabins per car, each with its own shower. "In the Presidential Suite you have a tub, which is extremely rare," d'Angeac told the Miami Herald. The suite, which takes up an entire car, also comes with its own kitchen and a butler.

The immersive exhibition is one of 50 gallery and Curio presentations at the 18th edition of the fair. The opulence of the Orient Express is emblematic of the fair's theme: The Golden Age: Looking to the Future.

"This is the future, how we make a kinder, gentler, more sustainable world moving forward," explained Jen Roberts, Design Miami CEO. "This has meaning to me. My parents went on the QE2 and Oriental Express."

As more travelers opt to travel by train instead of flying, Roberts predicted, the journey will take longer, but the amenities will become more lavish, allowing people to slow down and enjoy the ride.

Some of the galleries have taken the Golden Age to heart and are providing objects that glisten or are made of actual gold. The Ippodo Gallery (G/36), based in Tokyo and New York, offers exquisite tea ceremony vessels and vases. Two vases by Hirotomi Maeda illustrate expert craftsmanship in gold-silver-copper alloy. They sell for \$100,000 each. But the gallery has something for everyone's wallet, including incense holders for \$640. One of the more interesting works: ceramic tea

jars and bowls by Yukiya Izumita, whose hometown was devastated by the 2011 tsunami that followed a 9.1-magnitude undersea earthquake.

“His work is about recovery and rebirth after the tsunami,” gallery director Shoko Aono said. “He used wave textures and driftwood to fire the clay, which gives it a dark color. He has a patient and humble nature and found beauty out of a natural disaster.”

Attached to the gallery is a lattice-work tea house. The gallery plans to host a modern Japanese tea ceremony for 10 lucky visitors each day from Nov. 30 through Dec. 4, between 3 and 4 p.m. Email the gallery to reserve your spot: MAIL@IPPODOGALLERY.COM.

On the opposite end of the scale is Harry Nuriev (C/03). The always innovative and amusing New York designer is turning trash into gold. His tongue-in-cheek examination of the city’s daily outpouring of waste led to the creation of a couch that looks like an assemblage of black plastic trash bags. They’re not. They actually are more like sturdy beanbags filled with granular pellets. The work is comprised of nine individual bags lashed to one another. It comes in an edition of 10 and is priced at \$50,000 each.



“The Trash Bag Sofa,” by Harry Nuriev is on display, left, during Design Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022, in Miami Beach, Fla. MATIAS J. OCNER mocner@miamiherald.com

Other not-to-be missed designs:

The Design Talks Theater — Theaster Gates, the iconoclastic installation artist from Chicago, created a place of grace to celebrate the life of artist and designer Virgil Abloh, his friend who died on the opening day of Design Miami last year. In lieu of chairs, Gates installed 10 wooden pews, each with its own pockets for hymnals.

The Collectors Lounge (X-11) — Sponsored by AIG Private Client Group, the lounge features the work of two men with Miami connections. The entrance features ornate light fixtures created by Bradley L. Bowers, who founded his eponymous brand in Miami’s Design District and now runs a New Orleans-based studio. Bowers won the Best Contemporary Work award at last year’s Design Miami for his Large Tabletop Halo Lantern made from pleated and folded paper. Bowers teamed up with the talented young architect Alexis Cogul Leonart of Doo Architecture,

based in Cogul's native Barcelona and Miami. B&B Italia also provided some of the most comfortable and selfie-inducing furnishings of the fair — an embracing armchair with a tennis ball-shaped ottoman.

The Village Potter Bodega by Roberto Lugo (C/09) — Collectors can pick up a Lugo original for a few hundred dollars. The beloved artist aims to make his art accessible to all and calls upon themes and images that resonate with urban appeal. There's a sippy cup in the shape of a fire hydrant (\$450), a butter dish in the form of a Philadelphia subway car (\$750), and even an ode to the Robert Mitchum character in the 1955 film, "The Night of the Hunter" — a pair of brass knuckles with the words "Love" and "Hate" created in ceramic.

R& Company (G/32), the New York gallery that represents Lugo, also has on hand urns similar to the one on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as the artist's take on the orange-and-black Grecian jars — a Black man walking a pack of pit bulls in front of a phalanx of Philadelphia rowhouses.

For those who can't get enough of Lugo, he's also on exhibit at the Wolfsonian Museum in Miami Beach through May 28, 2023.

Wexler Gallery (G/23) — Be sure to stop by to see the Nyala chair, which steals the show in the newly released film "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." Ethiopian-American furniture designer Jomo Tariku created the curvaceous black wooden chair. Another of Tariku's iconic works — The Mido Chair — resembles an Afro pick and is in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Jason Jacques Gallery (G/07) — Think of your favorite fairytale figures, life-size and in vibrant green flocking, and you'll have an idea of the world Finnish designer Kim Simonsson created inside the Jason Jacques booth.



"The Year of the Moss Children" by Kim Simonsson is presented by Jason Jacques Gallery at Design Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022, in Miami Beach, Fla. [MATIAS J. OCNER *mocner@miamiherald.com*](mailto:MATIAS.J.OCNER@miamiherald.com)

AGO Projects (G/21) — If you like images of cheery cats bouncing off the wall as if in a caffeine fit (the Haas Brothers), Mexican tiles that can cover your floor and wall and stretch on for miles (Ceramica Suro), and a sofa so sexy you might want to pet it (Ryan Belli), then stop by and see Rodman Primack and Rudy Weissenberg's offerings from Mexico. Before Primack opened his gallery, he served as the executive director of Design Miami.

Sofia Poma explores a work by Haas Brothers at the Gallery ALL booth during Design Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022, in Miami Beach, Fla. [MATIAS J. OCNER *mocner@miamiherald.com*](mailto:MATIAS.J.OCNER@miamiherald.com)

The Southern Guild (G/30), always an annual favorite at Design Miami, did not disappoint this year. "I think they're so amazing," said Beverly Berman of Naples, Florida. Berman is a huge fan of the work and owns two by Zizipho Poswa, who creates oversized ornamental vessels with

handles that resemble African hairstyles. “The heritage of them and the size and stature of them ... I don’t like figurative work, but these are like portraits, with inspiration from African hairstyles from Cameroon and South Africa.” Diana Wyant, who winters in Miami, also gushed about Southern Guild. “They always have things out of the ordinary. They have a lot of pottery and ceramics — which I like. I find the fair in general is funky and a lot more relaxed than Art Basel.”

Best in Show award winners:

Best of Show — Gallery (tie)/

Sarah Myerscough

Magen H

Best of Show — Curio (tie)/

Stroll Garden

Tuleste Factory

Contemporary piece/

Pair of Max Lamb chairs at Gallery FUMI

Historic Piece /

Dining table by Jose Zanine Caldas at Dilentante42

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