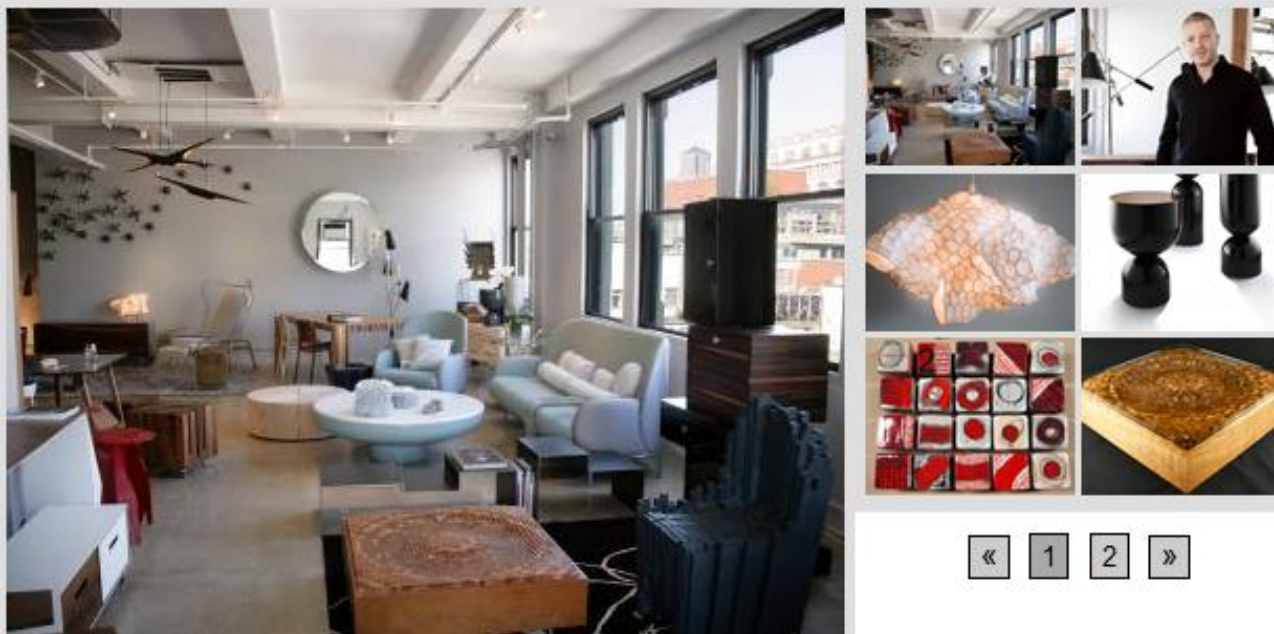


## Seven Exotic Designers You Need to Know

NOVEMBER 4TH, 2011

Discover exclusive pieces from around the world at the new Manhattan showroom of the Mondo Collection.



From their 15th-floor Flatiron aerie, Mario Elcid and Hany Boutros are giving New Yorkers a refreshing perspective on exotic design. The **Mondo Collection**, as their new showroom is known, brings together exclusive pieces from 25 designers representing 12 countries. Don't go expecting tribal patterns, though—the pieces here are sleek, surprising expressions of contemporary global design.

Elcid worked for an architectural firm in Royal Oak, Michigan, before “falling in love” with the work of Spanish designer Jaime Hayon. He set off on a two-year world tour in search of similarly unique designs that aren't available here.

The trip was a success, and now the pieces in the Mondo Collection are not only exclusive (for instance, a rare bench by Karim Rashid hewn from wood recovered from Venice's Grand Canal); they're completely customizable. “If you buy high-end and are dealing with luxury materials, the price can be steep,” says Elcid. “So we feel the customer is entitled to customization. It's not just color, but scale and size.”

Since opening in September, Mondo has been doing a brisk business with collectors from as far afield as Dubai, China, and Russia—which amuses Elcid. “This stuff was under their noses for so long, but now that it’s in New York, they all want to buy it,” he says. “And we’re happy to help them.”

Here, Elcid introduces the most important designers you don’t know about—yet.

**Jaime Hayon, London**

“Hayon is one of the best names in furniture, but you can’t find his work here, and we got the exclusive for it. These pieces are made in France, of the highest quality. Everybody can do lacquering, but this liquid lacquering you see is done in Paris by the company that does the concept cars for Citroën.”

**Nada Debs, Lebanon**

“She’s from Lebanon, and she has a whole line inspired by Japan. She’s got these Origami tables and these Squid tables, but she made herself famous for her resin collection, which is handmade with metal. She took this very ethnic, very old technique that’s been used since the Ottoman Empire and made it very contemporary. It’s laid piece by piece, with five layers of resin. I call it jewelry for furniture. You put these with any sofa and it creates a shiny bling effect.”

**Pierre Ospina, France, London**

This is a French-Colombian student whose graduation project last year, “Blossom Bulbs,” I spotted in a group show at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair. I fell in love with them and looked him up and said, “You’re not taking these back to London.” They’re indoor/outdoor and use LED bulbs. It’s all steel on the inside, and the exterior is made of rubber from bicycle tires.”

**Patrick Weder, Brooklyn**

“He’s based Brooklyn. He designed this incredible credenza. The interior is walnut, and the drawers are lined with cedar, but the outside box is all concrete. He also works with Corian, and created this Beehive lamp. Most of his pieces are made to order.”

**Michael Rupich, New York City**

“He’s a graphic designer who loves working with wood and is inspired by pixelated pictures. He takes a block of amazing wood, chops it all up, and then rearranges it in a 3-D format to create an image. His coffee table, “Ripples,” is meant to represent a drop of water. He brought it in with a glass top, but I took the top off because I want people to feel it and see the work.”

**Kaiser Suidan, Ferndale, Michigan**

“This is a personal friend of mine from Michigan. He does these installations in hotels and public places, but he doesn’t have a showroom. It’s all ceramic, all handmade, and it’s the easiest thing to attach to a wall and turn into a 3-D art installation. It’s all very attainable. You can get pieces for as little as \$90 or a whole installation for \$3,000.”

**Tracey Sawyer, New York City**

“She introduced what she called the Naturals. It’s all undyed, untreated wool. It’s meant to be on the floor, but it’s almost too pretty. It’s very warm and contemporary. She’s also doing very minimal lines with the hand-knotted rugs.”

— Michael Slenske