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## Brazilian Designer Claudia Moreira Salles Uses Unusual Material Niobium in New Lighting



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By Ryan Waddoups (<https://www.instagram.com/ryanwaddoups/>)

Image courtesy of Espasso.

Acclaimed Brazilian designer Claudia Moreira Salles (<http://claudiamoreirasalles.com/>) is unveiling a collection of limited-edition lamps at her solo exhibition *Fine Tuning* at Espasso (<http://www.espasso.com/>) in New York. Fashioned using the rare element niobium, Salles' new fixtures mark the metal's premier use in lighting.

Used in aeronautical engineering and oil pipeline construction to reinforce steel, niobium—a natural resource in Brazil—presented uncharted territory for Salles, who never turns down a design challenge. “In order to achieve the [collection's] distinct spectrum of colors, we had to develop a very complex process, including submerging the niobium in water and acid and then applying an electric current to it,” Salles recalls.



Image courtesy of Espasso.

The chemical process reveals a lustrous array of colors that distinguishes Salles's fixtures. "The colors obtained from the electrolysis process are different from other painted or stained metals," says Salles. "They have a magical iridescence that sometimes gives the illusion of other colors from preceding crystalline layers. The fact that the colors are obtained without using any pigment makes it seem like they come from within, as if the pieces were blushing."



### ESPASSO Presents: Fine Tuning by Claudia Moreira Salles

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ESPASSO Presents: Fine Tuning by Claudia Moreira Salles (<https://vimeo.com/178343095>) from ESPASSO (<https://vimeo.com/user55296839>) on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com>).



Aside from lighting, Salles will also exhibit a series of original furnishings as part of a collaboration between her studio, ETEL Interiores

(<http://www.etelinteriores.com.br/>), and Espasso. The collection includes magnetic coffee tables, a new rendition of her Canguru desk, and a walk-through installation of wood and concrete coat hangers.



Images courtesy of Espasso.

After joining furniture company Escriba in the early 1980s, Salles started designing furnishings that echo the rationality instrumental to Brazilian design. While loyal to native woods, Salles constantly explores other materials such as cast concrete, stone, steel, and copper. “[I am] always testing the limits of traditional craft techniques with a contemporary design language,” Salles says. Her furnishings can be found in many of Brazil’s prominent cultural centers, including Paralelogramos at the Baró Gallery, the Museu da Casa Brasileira, and Casa França Brasil.

*Fine Tuning* will open at Espasso’s New York gallery on September 13, 2016.