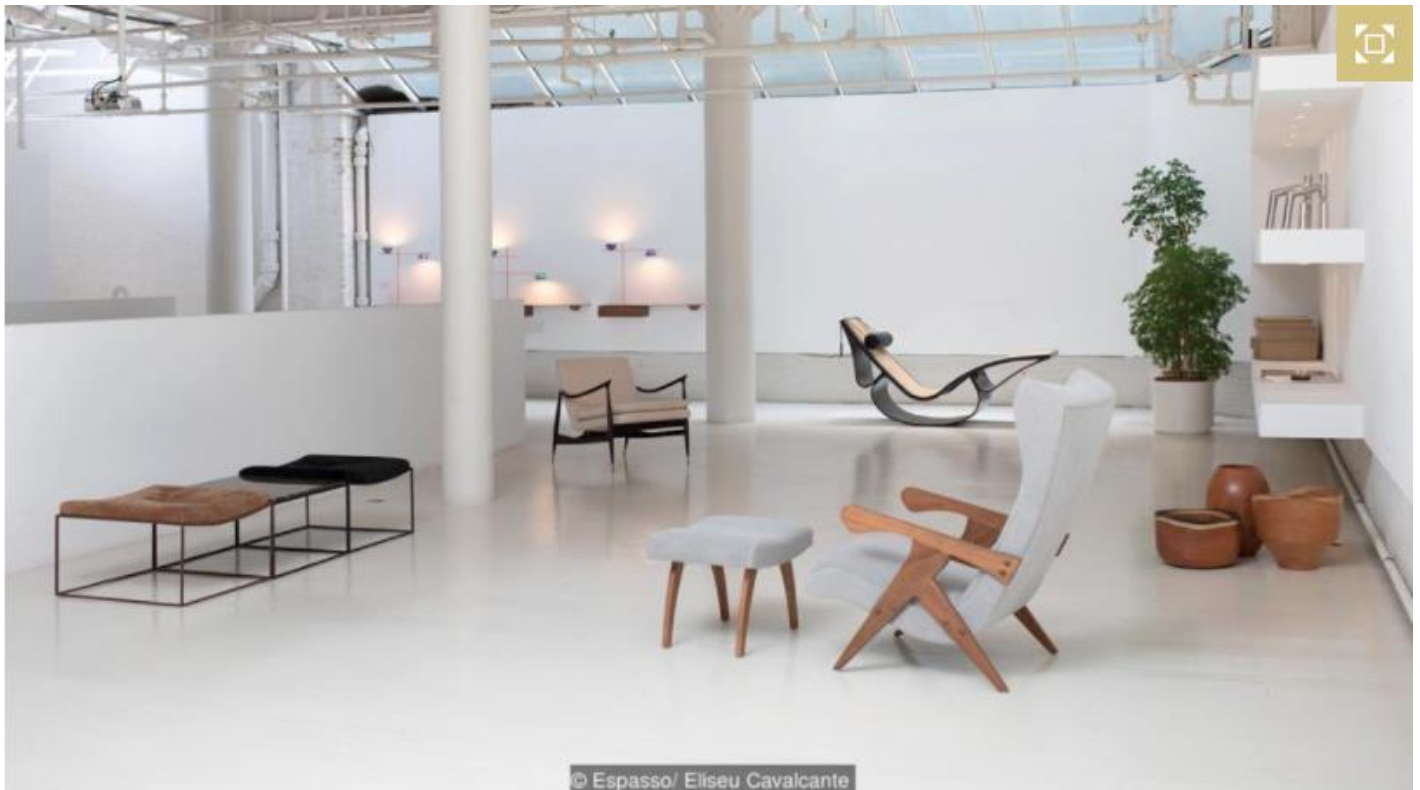


The imaginative, elegant furniture of Latin America

At this year's Design Miami fair, exhibits by designers from Brazil and Chile are taking centre stage. It's about time, says Dominic Lutyens

For years overshadowed by the more famous output of European and North American designers, Latin American design is finally taking centre stage. The work of key South American creatives such as the late architect and designer Sergio Rodrigues, artist and designer Joaquim Tenreiro and artist, designer and architect José Zanine Caldas may be less well-known than that of internationally renowned US luminaries Charles and Ray Eames, say, or France's Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand. But the region's furniture and homeware are being recognized for what they are - an important part of the mid-century design canon.



Mid-century Latin American design is increasingly sought after, such as this work by Zanine Caldas, at ESPASSO in Miami (Credit: Espasso/ Eliseu Cavalcante)

There is a growing demand for both mid-century and contemporary Latin American design, judging by its strong presence this year at Design Miami/, the annual fair held at Miami Beach (from 6 to 10 December), where 31 international galleries are taking part.

Embracing colour and idiosyncratic, sculptural forms, mid-century-modern design offered a more relaxed alternative to strictly functionalist early 20th-Century modernism. And, arguably, Latin American furniture is one of the most expressive branches of mid-century design: its chunky, sculptural, often hand-made forms were fashioned from indigenous woods, such as jacaranda (a type of rosewood) in rich, syrupy hues, leather and rattan. And, since the 1980s, younger designers, notably the São Paulo-based Campana Brothers, have upheld this tradition, creating work that prioritizes form over function.



Displayed at Espasso, Miami, are 1950 armchairs, by Joaquim Tenreiro, a pioneer of modernist Brazilian furniture (Credit: Espasso/ Eliseu Cavalcante)

ESPASSO, a gallery with a permanent location in Miami, sells vintage, re-edition and contemporary Brazilian design by Sergio Rodrigues, Zanine Caldas and Joaquim Tenreiro, and is unveiling its newly expanded gallery in Ironside. Tenreiro, who was born in Portugal, and moved to Rio in the 1920s, created work that bridges a European modernist aesthetic with more ruggedly sculptural Brazilian qualities. He created sleek, European-looking sideboards yet his 1940s rocking chair in rattan and dark rosewood — on show at Rio gallery Mercado Moderno — epitomizes the Brazilian taste for organic forms. Tenreiro created many pieces for celebrated Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, whose aesthetic was similarly organic.

For full article:

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20171204-the-imaginative-elegant-furniture-of-latin-america>