

## The Good Life

"Today the world is obsessed with the yesterday," says Carlos Junqueira, whose New York-based Espasso (with satellites in Miami, Los Angeles and London) shows the broad sweep of Brazilian design. "But yesterday always yields to tomorrow."

For collectors and connoisseurs, there is much to celebrate in contemporary Brazilian design—buildings and furniture inspired by the lushness of the landscape, rich natural resources, and raw materials including exotic woods and stone. In the past few decades, a new generation of designers has emerged to carry on the traditions of Brazilian style.

At the top of any list is the innovative work of the brothers Humberto and Fernando Campana. "There's the time *before* the Campanas in Brazil, and *after* the Campanas," says Marc Benda of the New York gallery Friedman Benda. "It's incontrovertible."

The Campanas burst onto the scene with work that takes the everyday material culture of Brazil and transforms it into furniture that is high art—for example, a chair made of dozens of stuffed teddy bears, or a Favela chair of crisscrossed sticks. "What is critical is that there is always a concept," says Benda. "They don't just make a dining chair. There is always an idea that fuels the design."

Last fall, Friedman Benda held its third major exhibition of work from the Campanas, who were the first Brazilian designers to have a show at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Says Benda, "They completely galvanized the conversation. They brought the discussion into the current world."

The Campanas are not the only Brazilian designers with an international following these days. The country's most prominent architect, Isay Weinfeld—whose first New York building, the two-tower Jardim condominium, topped out last fall—is also a designer and filmmaker. The





Brazilian artists as Beatriz Milhazes.

For some it truly is in the DNA. Saldanha is the grandson of Paulo Werneck, arguably Brazil's most important mosaic artist of the mid 20th century. Werneck also designed furniture that eluded the

architect Marcio Kogan has designed structures on four continents, including Brazil's entry to the 2012 Venice Biennale. Architect and designer Arthur Casas has an office in New York, while Lia Siqueira has a presence in Miami.

"They all masterfully blend a minimal and yet warm Brazilian aesthetic honed from the early modernist era," says Saldanha, "with work that uses plenty of wood, elements like the *cobogó* [see-through construction blocks], and lush suspended gardens."

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The Brazilian palette is wide and holistic: It spills over from architecture to interiors to furniture to landscape. Isabel Duprat worked alongside Burle Marx and later set out on her own, creating gardens for notable structures throughout São Paulo. Burle Marx's influence is so profound that it can be seen not just in landscape design but also in the work of such prominent

public eye until his grandson began to not just reintroduce it but also reinterpret it, adding rugs and wallpaper to the collection. "I'm taking the pieces from the archives and transforming them to suit contemporary living," says Saldanha, who was born in Brazil and is now based in Miami.

The young up-and-coming designer Rodrigo Ohtake is the son of Ruy Ohtake, the last of Brazil's mid-century modernists. Another rising star, Zanini de Zanine, the son of Zanine Caldas, was featured in a recent exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The furniture designer Fernando Mendes worked alongside his uncle, Sérgio Rodrigues, before setting out on his own, and still produces his famous relative's archival work along with his own highly regarded lines. "It's important to see these designers in context," says Espasso's Junqueira.

To Saldanha, this explosion of interest in Brazilian architecture and design pays homage to a country where resilience and self-reliance have always been at the base of creativity. "The roots are deep," he says. —BETH DUNLOP



Clockwise from top left: Roberto Burle Marx's Copacabana beach promenade, Rio de Janeiro, 1970; bar stool by Zanini de Zanine; Bolonha lamp by Gaspar Saldanha; Noah bench by the Campana brothers