

Cast Iron
16 East 79th Street
May 16 - June 25 2021

8 designers
8 iron pieces
12 in each edition + 1AP

Designers:
Bradley L. Bowers
Chen Chen & Kai
Williams
Ryan Decker
Brecht Gander
Charlotte Kingsnorth
Faissal El Malak
Tellurico
Nel Verbeke

Who is the designer? What does the designer do?

Design, as I use the term here, is fundamentally tied to industry. The machine didn't think on its own, unlike the craftsmen, so the designer was born. Someone to tell the machine what to make; what worked and looked good, what didn't work and looked bad.

Cast iron was there at this industrial beginning. A pattern was cut in wood and multiples were made. One wood part became 500 iron ones. The one became many, but many was not endless. As technology progressed 500 became 5000 became 50000 produced from one pattern; patterns now die only through changing fashions, not functional failures.

Yet, we can look to technology again to solve our new material challenges – production norms of making in excess and long global supply chain shipments – both taxing our fragile environment.

In this edition I manufacture only twelve: incense burners cast from hand carved Palestinian soaps, a tiny foam table digitally scanned then scaled up to human size, a standing lamp only conceived in a digital environment materialized through advanced computational cutting technology.

Let's redefine globalized design – no longer as a synonym for generic 'in and out' fashions permeating all global corners - but as worlds of ideas and opportunities. Five blocks or a million miles away human experiences both digital and real overlap while running completely parallel: we live disparate truths. We can materialize more of these truths but make less, be less wasteful and make special things. Use the newest technology and broad diversity of ideas to create modern decorative art, rejecting the prescription and uniformity of mass designed production.

Because if material culture is an expression of our culture can we have a designer?