

METROPOLIS

7 of Our Favorite Exhibits from Design Miami/

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Samuel Medina

Design Miami/, one of the country's most important shows for "collector design," just wrapped its 14th edition. Unlike other design outlets, which conceal exorbitant price tags behind a veneer of approachability, Design Miami/ delights in excess and immoderation. Here, expensive objects are indeed expensive-looking. There are, of course, quieter moments to be found within the iconic tent...



Courtesy James Harris

Functional Art Gallery

The smattering of pieces here seemed to drip, melt, warp, and crack in real time. None of them—a sinewy chair and waxy bookshelf, an icy coffee table—presented as being particularly functional. It turns out the mysterious material they share is in fact un-recyclable industrial plastic waste, all hand-salvaged by the Dutch designer Théophile Blandet from laboratories in and outside of Eindhoven. (Blandet is a graduate of the city's design school.) Parsing out the different plastics is a fool's errand, says Benoît Wolfrom, cofounder of the newly formed Functional Art Gallery in Berlin. And so the wall labels generalize, subsuming "a long complicated list of abbreviated names and chemicals" under the more succinct "mixed media plastics." Blandet carefully works all this anonymous stuff, molding and bending and slotting it into a kind of apocalyptic tectonics. If the collection is "an obituary to plastic," it also portends a vision of a world more tenuous and exhausted than even our own. As Wolfrom has previously noted, "We're all in 2018, but Théophile is already in 2100."

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