



**BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS** At left: Dennis van der Burch and Bert van der Grift, of design duo Bert & Dennis, at ICFF's Studio Bernhardt Design. Their Fold (above) and Holdit (below) chairs debuted at the fair.



## Warped Tour

Playful turns and structural shifts—at ICFF, the world's top designers were on a bender

| By Saxon Henry |  
| Portrait by Kate Glicksberg |

Europeans from Sweden down to Spain—and especially from in-between hot spots Belgium and the Netherlands—set the agenda at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York in May, throwing some unexpected twists and turns into modern design. Here, we sit down—carefully, so as not to get swallowed by their chairs!—with Dutch sensations Bert & Dennis, then tour the other outré offerings.

### Getting Graphic

Each year, ICFF Studio Bernhardt Design honors the hippest new furnishings to spring from emerging design minds. This year, it was Dutch design firm **Bert & Dennis** ([bertendennis.nl](http://bertendennis.nl)) that stole much of the buzz with its colorfully upholstered, fanciful geometric furniture, which includes pieces like the Puzzled seating system: puzzle-piece-shaped cushions that interlock to form a sofa.

"Going to the ICFF and being selected by Bernhardt was the most exciting thing so far," says Dennis van der Burch of the meteoric success he and business partner Bert van der Grift have experienced since launching their design studio a mere 11 months before the fair. "This year, since the lift-off, has been a roller coaster, and from what we're hearing from the market, there is still a lot to come."

Fittingly, it was a piece of furniture that brought the thirtysomethings together in the first place. Bert, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, was selling a PK22 lounge chair; Dennis, who owns the design upholstery workshop [meubelstoffeerderij.nl](http://meubelstoffeerderij.nl), went to inspect its condition for one of his clients. "When Dennis entered my house, he saw it was filled with experiments and drawings of chairs," says Bert. "He felt he'd found a kindred spirit with a chair fetish!"

This fascination was on display at ICFF, where the duo introduced two new chairs: Holdit and Fold. The first is a bent metal structure with a "pocket" into which a seat-back cushion is inserted like a business card. Fold, a linear, origami-like side chair from which the seat and seatback appear to have been "punched out," was a crowd favorite.

"We are both very passionate about making graphical designs to lust after," says Bert. "A design should give you the feeling like being in love—at least that's how we feel. But hey, we're the ones with a chair fetish."



### Program Notes

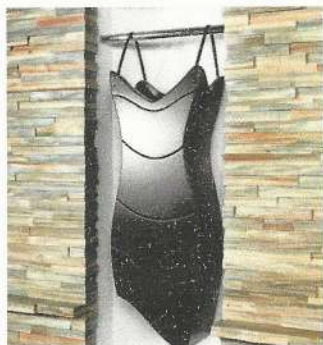
High-design junkies might be considering a move to Belgium after taking in some of the country's exports at the **101% Designed in Brussels** ([101pr100designed.be](http://101pr100designed.be)) booth. Most striking? On-site-07, from the series of programmatic furniture by **Sebastien Wierinick** ([os00.com](http://os00.com)), is an awe-inspiring construct in which Medusa would feel stylishly at home. Wierinick attempted to explain his inspiration—"If technique or materials have an obvious influence on design practice, the context itself is never neutral," he told us—but in this case, the piece pretty much speaks for itself.



### Run Wild

The prototype of L.A.-based designer **Jang Won Yoon's** ([jangyoon.com](http://jangyoon.com)) sleek Sprint bar stool was a runaway hit at ICFF Studio Bernhardt Design. Yoon claims it's his ongoing conversation with the duality of organic forms that brings his creations an edge. "I see the pieces as both strong and fierce, and delicate and alive," he says. We're betting the stool won't stay a prototype for long!

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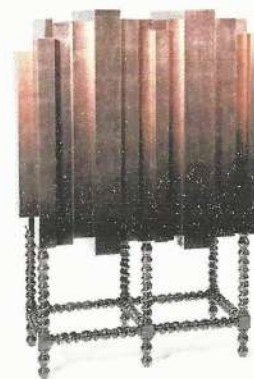
### Go Figure!

Judson Beaumont of **Straight Line Designs** ([straightlinedesigns.com](http://straightlinedesigns.com)) redefined a classic with his four-drawer Little Black Dresser. Perhaps not every girl can own one, but we're sure many aesthetes of either gender will find it a wardrobe essential.



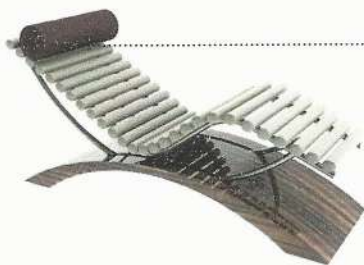
### Garden of Seatin'

**Vitra** ([vitra.com](http://vitra.com)) won an editor's award for outdoor furniture for the Vegetal chair, designed by **Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec** ([bouroullec.com](http://bouroullec.com)). The design stems from the French brothers' take on historical gardens of the 20th century, but there's nothing old-fashioned about it.



### King Size

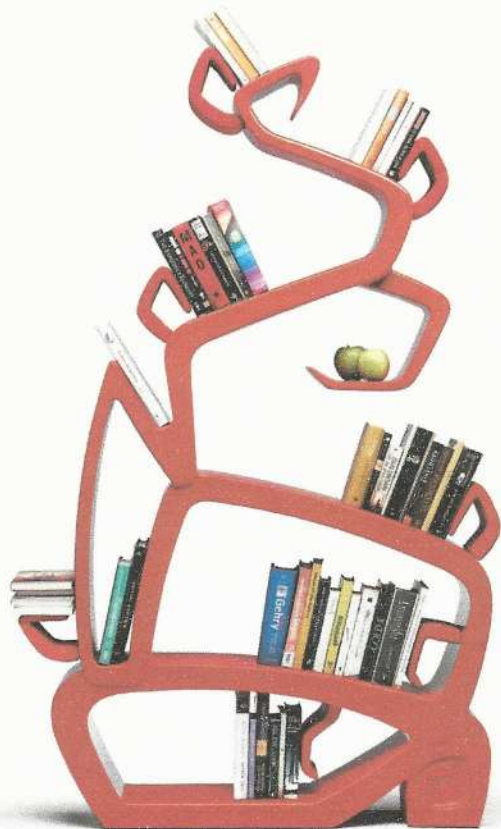
Named after King Manuel I of Portugal, the D. Manuel cabinet by **Boca do Lobo** ([bocadolobo.com](http://bocadolobo.com)) has a commanding profile with an artful finish that fades from copper leaf at the top to shiny black lacquer at the bottom. The top portion was inspired by a city skyline, while the turned legs are reminiscent of the design style favored by the King. Might we say he was a bit ahead of his time?



### Roll With It

The creamy leather cushions of **Andrew Muggleton's** ([andrewmuggleton.com](http://andrewmuggleton.com)) Macassar longue appear to be delicately perched atop its domed wooden

base. But don't be afraid to take a seat: the thin rails are crafted from stainless steel, and the base is carved out of Macassar ebony—a wood so dense that it is notoriously difficult to bend, and also among the most durable and lustrous in the ebony family. Available locally at **Lawrence Savage Galleries**, 4217 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables, 305.446.1222 and 66 N.E. 40th St., Miami, 305.576.1666.

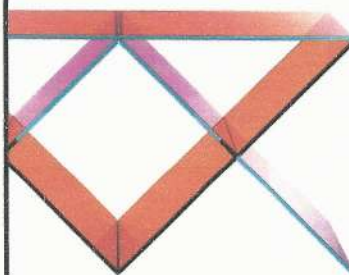
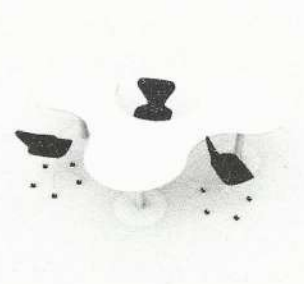


### Read the Leaves

There are likely to be plenty of bookworms around the Wisdom Tree bookshelf by **Jordi Milà** ([jordimila.com](http://jordimila.com)). The practical-but-provocative piece—as well as the rest of the Barcelona-based designer's debut collection—does precisely what the Milà says he set out to do: it breaks the boundaries between art and product design.

### Tie the Knot

Swedish designer **Jangir Maddadi's** ([jangirmaddadi.se](http://jangirmaddadi.se)) Union desk was brand new at the fair. The connected circular workspaces just might be the new DNA of workplace togetherness: Maddadi was inspired by the multi-tasking required in the modern-day workplace.



### X Factor

The XX console by **Johanna Grawunder** ([grawunder.com](http://grawunder.com)) was on display in the **Glas Italia** ([glasitalia.com](http://glasitalia.com)) booth at ICFF. An artful intersection of transparent pink- and orange-colored glass, it mirrors hardcore style. Available locally at **imoderni**, 143 N.W. 23rd St., Miami, 877.455.6350. **M**