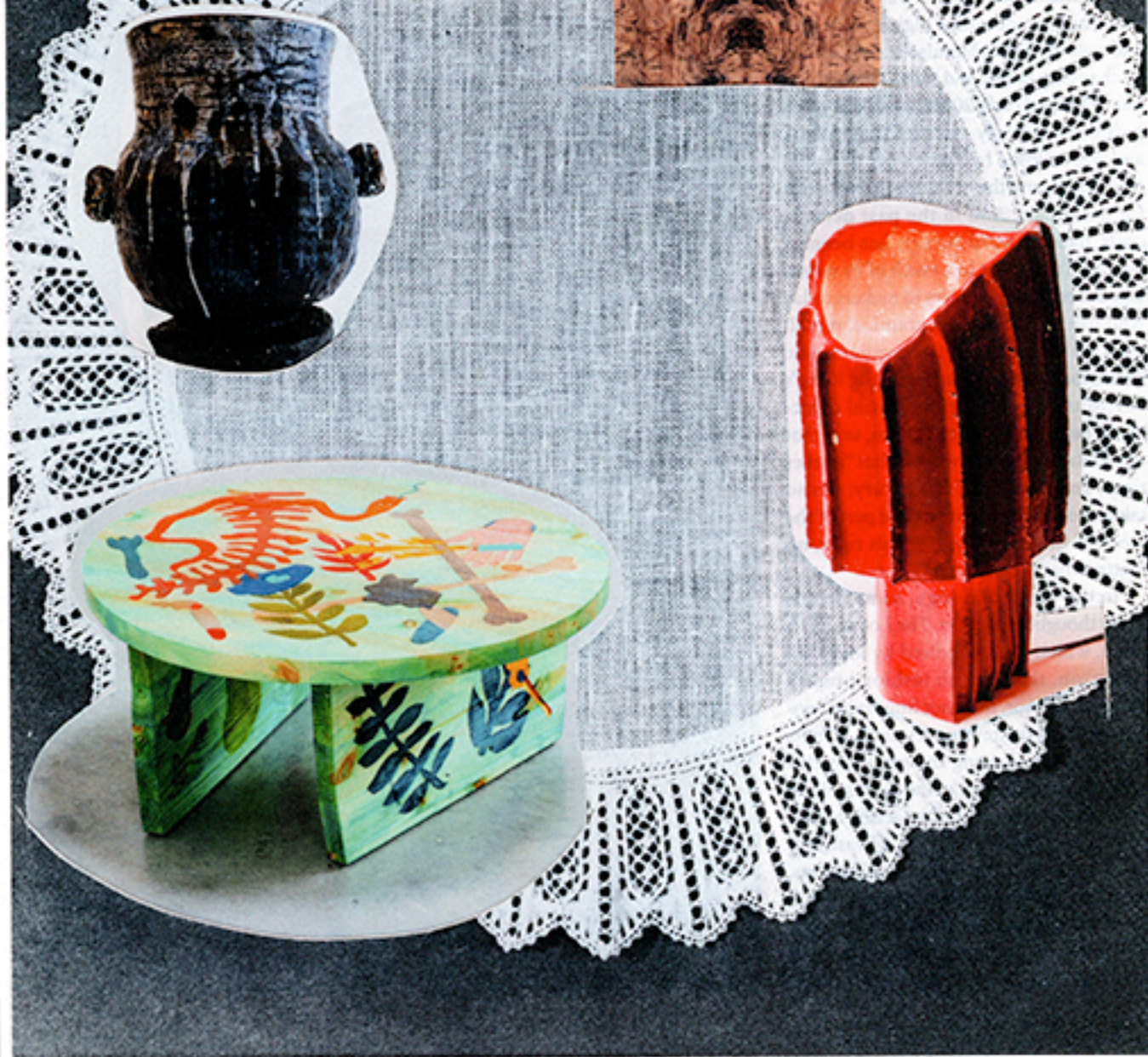


LIVING

ON DISPLAY



Craft Is King In our automated age, the painstakingly handmade objects created by today's top artists and artisans seem both nostalgic and daringly modern. *by Pilar Viladas. Photo-illustrations by Ruth van Beek*

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THE WORD CRAFT has always denoted something made with a high level of skill and quality. But it has also been a victim of changing tastes and fads. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, craft was often regarded—wrongly—as something folksy, and was eclipsed by a new wave of industrial design and the collector-driven craze for design art. And in the past decade, *craft*, like the word *luxury*, has been so overused that it has lost much of its meaning. But real craft endures in makers today who use wood, stone, ceramics, metal, glass, or fiber as a creative medium. Aric Chen, the curator at large at Hong Kong's M+ Museum and the curatorial director of this year's Design Miami, says that one of the keys to this work is that "it takes time, and time itself is a luxury; it also takes time to appreciate on the part of the viewer." Craft, he says, "equals rigor, no matter what the material."

In the world of design, some people never thought otherwise. The Loewe Craft Prize, which was conceived by Jonathan Anderson, the Spanish fashion brand's creative director, to honor important contributions to contemporary craft, is in its third edition. Among the works by this year's 29 finalists, two of the most striking projects were woven. In his *Geisha Handbag Series*, Deloss Webber, a Washington State-based artist, fills rattan baskets, some of which have bamboo handles, with pieces of granite, rendering them non-functional yet arresting. Inspired by Japanese ikebana baskets, Webber's pieces add



Recently exhibited handmade works by **Vincenzo De Cotiis** transform rugged materials into works of design with an aggressive, otherworldly aesthetic. From top: The DC 1101 coffee table is made from recycled fiberglass, resin, and perforated cardboard; the interior of the DC 1611 mirrored wall cabinet is made from both silver-plated and polished brass; the DC 1626 sofa has a sculptural brass base and hand-dyed velvet mohair; the 10-foot-long DC 317 low cabinet is made from recycled fiberglass, carpentersworkshopgallery.com.

Previous page, clockwise from top: The six-foot-long, solid-walnut Trophy Cabinet by designer **Aaron Poritz** gives traditional tambour sliding doors a luxe look by painstakingly matching the veins of wood used on its doors' veneers. cristinagrajalesinc.com. **Floris Wubben's** glazed ceramic creations—vases, tables, shelves, and more—are made by squeezing clay through purpose-made extrusion devices. This table lamp is one of a kind. thefutureperfect.com. Rising Dutch talent **Laurids Gallée** uses a wood-dyeing technique of his own creation and pairs those materials with new takes on traditional marquetry to fashion objects such as this *Pyromaniac's Table*. lauridsgallee.com. **Adam Silverman**, the former studio director of the design brand Heath Ceramics, has exhibited work like this vessel at various institutions, which includes a show this fall at New York City's Cooper Union. friedmanbenda.com.