

products profile **emerging designers**

By Alissa Ponchione

## ON THE RISE

Six firms on our radar for their innovative approach



### Studio Føy

Oslo, Norway

**Street Cred:** The young design team of Guro Sørbo Midtun and Siri Line still have a year left before they earn their master's degrees in product design, but they have already created the perfect marriage—mixing a Nordic design sensibility with a playful aesthetic, characterized cheekily in their Flamingo stool, the duo's inaugural product. "We strive to create authentic products, driven by curiosity and playfulness," Line notes. The stool's long, thin legs nod to the bird's own, while the curved back recreates the flamingo's neck as it dives into water. The two have found that a clever narrative "around the product is the key" to a successful design, says Sørbo Midtun. [studiofoy.no](http://studiofoy.no)



### Janelle Pietrzak

Joshua Tree, California

**Street Cred:** Having worked in the fashion industry for 10 years, Pietrzak was always interested in fabrics. Now her work at All Roads Design mixes bright hues, natural fibers, and manmade shiny materials that "explore new ways to create texture within the woven grid structure." It's a balancing

act between art and design, she says, where function and beauty meet. Take her recent line of bedding and textiles for Anthropologie, which was informed by a trip to Joshua Tree (she has since moved her studio there) where the desert "looks like endless khaki with very little life" but upon closer inspection "is bursting with color," she says. [allroadsdesign.com](http://allroadsdesign.com)

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## Aotta Studio Moscow

**Street Cred:** For Alexander Bolmet, Tanya Repina, and Misha Repin of Aotta Studio, it's nature and a focus on sustainability that drives their design ethos. "We love nature, we observe it, we are inspired by it," Repina points out. "Our projects are aimed at accentuating the beauty and rationality of nature—on the problem of its preservation and protection." In EO Acoustic, for instance, the sound-absorbing fiber material is based on conifer needles, while the natural color and texture hints at a dense forest. "Perhaps our projects will help people be a little closer to nature," says Repin, "and make them a little happier and kinder."  
[aotta.com](http://aotta.com)



Photo by ANNIKI VALOMIELI



## Kasper Nyman Helsinki, Finland

**Street Cred:** Nyman's distinctive Scandinavian aesthetic can be credited for his streamlined and approachable Pause chair, one of many of his products made of wood, "a very natural material to us Finnish," he says. "It is also a clean and ecological material, and gives products life and character." It's the small details in his work—take the peekaboo back in his Mono dining chair—that boast elements of surprise and comfort, as well as show a respect for the materials and the craft.  
[officekn.fi](http://officekn.fi)



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## Studio Nito

Kassel, Germany

**Street Cred:** Tobias Juretzek and Nil Atalay, the creative minds behind Studio Nito, don't shy away from color or material.

It's there in the Bobina series—bold blue tones, vibrant yellow hues, and fiery red accents highlight the construction, which wraps yarn threads around a mold for a 3D texture. “We are driven by certain thematic backgrounds, processes, and intriguing discoveries,” says Atalay. “In this creative melting pot, we look for special moments and try to communicate them in a beautiful way.” By experimenting with textiles and manipulating the malleable material, the duo's self-aware design approach accomplishes a trifecta of goals: evoking emotions, encouraging abstract thinking, and “stimulating a reflective way of life,” adds Juretzek.

[studionito.com](http://studionito.com)



## Nikolas Bentel

Astoria, New York

**Street Cred:** Bentel has grown up around design his whole life—his parents are Carol and Paul Bentel of New York architecture firm Bentel & Bentel—and has developed a perspective that veers outside the lines, crafting objects that “border on the nonsensical,” he says. Though functional, pleasing, and often irreverent, his products are not only notable for using innovative materials—the Scrap stool is made inside a trashcan with paper waste that is mixed with slow drying glue and dyed magenta—but also for his commentary on the world. In his Aerochromics collection, for instance, the reactive clothing line changes its patterns as increased levels of harmful particles are detected in the air. His approach, he says, emphasizes “my unease with the looming dystopia that our hyper-consumerism seems to foretell and which designers seem unwilling to facilitate in their work.”

[nikolasbentelstudio.com](http://nikolasbentelstudio.com)



**Edmond Wong**  
Hong Kong

**Street Cred:** Since Wong was a kid living in transitional housing in Hong Kong, he has been a designer, improvising with the materials around him to make sling shots out of tree branches, swords from polystyrene boxes, and spending countless hours doodling on the wood walls at home. "It is amazing how the living environment could shape a person," he notes. His versatile X Bench from his Fit-niture line, for instance, can not only flank the dining table as extra seating but also act as a hidden gym bench, perfect for urbanites who want to do a few upper-body exercises before dinner. "Regardless of what I might be doing," he says, "creative thinking is at the core."

[edmondwongstudio.com](http://edmondwongstudio.com)



**Studio Kirchmer**  
Miami

**Street Cred:** Kendra Kirchmer sees the timeless quality in design. Her products evolve and age, nodding to the complexity of the process. Her stark, minimal approach celebrates precise, severe angles but with a modern flavor: "a bright copper wheel that will patina to beautiful greenish blue, a simple solid wood bowl with a rounded base changes its wobble over time and through seasonal changes," she explains. Most recently, she's worked on a coffee table that reveals instead of conceals the drawer. For Kirchmer, it's about creating "furniture and objects that come alive when used."

[studiokirchmer.com](http://studiokirchmer.com)



Photos by FRANK HAMMOND, MARK JOHNSTON, and KENDRA KIRCHMER