

DESIGN: Lebanon's design scene is flourishing at the House of Today Biennale in Beirut

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DESIGN / 22 HOURS AGO / TRACY LYNN CHEMALY



Left, 'Faros' bedside table by Charles Kalpakian. *Photography: Marco Pinarelli.* Right, Shifting Times by Sibylle Tarazi

Lebanon has previously gained cachet for producing red-carpet fashion designers such as [Elie Saab](#), [Rabih Kayrouz](#), [Zuhair Murad](#) and [Reem Acra](#), but its product designers are the ones now claiming their rightful positions in the spotlight. As the fourth House of Today Biennale kicks off in Beirut, the high quality calibre of this growing industry is clear.

House of Today, a non-profit organisation that has showcased Lebanese design internationally – from [Design Days Dubai](#) to [Design Miami](#) – uses its platform to fund scholarships for promising young Lebanese designers, aiding a new generation to step in and continue the trajectory set by leading lights such as [Nada Debs](#) and [Karen Chekerdjian](#).

With Beirut Design Week having celebrated its seventh edition in May, and the newer Beirut Design Fair hosting its second run this past September, the country's growing appetite and appreciation for design has created an increase in local production, with many traditional artisanal practices being revived as designers define a unique language from their small country.



*Ingrid by Jana Aridi. Photography: Marco Pinarelli*

This is evident in the Biennale's main exhibition, 'Elevate, the Quest for Heightened Senses', at 3Beirut where selected designers were tasked with producing tables that go beyond function to elicit emotional responses through sensory considerations. Tamara Barrage's 'Bodily' tables, made from a mix of resin and concrete, appear as otherworldly forms, while Charles Kalpakian's 'Faros' bedside tables in verde bamboo granite and black-brushed ash wood continues his fascination with reinterpreting motifs found in decorative arts.

Elsewhere at 3Beirut, 'The Shop' by House of Today in collaboration with WallpaperSTORE\* opens. Following the success of its inaugural 2016 edition, the pop-up store and exhibition space features newly commissioned exclusive works by flourishing Lebanese talent including Dima Haidar, Layal Chacar and Elie Metni displayed amongst the store's inventory of international designs.



*Ikebana vase by Elie Metni available at House of Today's 'The Shop' in collaboration with WallpaperSTORE\**

Collaborating with US brand R & Company, House of Today has paired designers from both countries to realise additional table designs. The Haas Brothers teamed up with fellow siblings Carlo and Mary-Lynn Massoud, while Rogan Gregory worked with Flavie Audi, and Katie Stout produced a table with Sayar & Garibeh.

R & Company principal Evan Snyderman, who is the biennale's exhibition ambassador, will be one of the speakers at the CraftPorn lecture series, which will also welcome Humberto Campana, Peter Marigold, Pascale Mussard, Formafantasma and Bernard Khoury.

Khoury has curated another stand-out show for the programme – a retrospective of furniture pieces designed by his late father, the modernist, brutalist architect Khalil Khoury, on view at the Sursock Museum, where CraftPorn will also take place. ✨



Fluid Encounter table design by Flavie Audi and Rogan Gregory, part of the House of Today and R & Company collaborations



Script Desk by Stephanie Moussallem. *Photography: Marco Pinarelli*



Tamara Barrage's 'Bodily' tables, made from a mix of resin and concrete. *Photography: Marco Pinarelli*