

# FORM & FUNCTION

The third edition of Design Days Dubai welcomes 34 galleries, bringing with them funky, beautiful and functional creations. *Canvas Daily* samples some highlights.



## CRAFTS COUNCIL UK

This unique pendant light installation by Odd Matter, a design team made up of Dutch native Els Woldhek and Bulgarian Georgi Manassiev, is rendered unique through the process of electroplating, which uses electrical current to reshape metals. Stained glass panels in shades of ruby, amber and mother-of-pearl are held by copper strips, which are immersed in an electroplating bath. The process also alters

the appearance of the copper, giving it texture where it would have otherwise been flat. Daniella Wells, co-curator of the Crafts Council UK booth at the fair, says "Odd Matter are interested in craftsmanship but also, in the beauty found in the unknown and the chance to work with different materials."



## \_CROFT

The result of Il Hoon Roh's seventh experiment in finding natural shapes, *Table R Ex07* was created by stretching one membrane into a three-dimensional form. For this version of the table, the South Korean artist used a virtual membrane stretching tool, allowing for greater precision and detailing. Left up to chance, the ensuing shapes mirror the building processes found in nature – this is central to Roh's practice, in which he investigates geometry in nature by examining its organic design process. Though this handcrafted version is casted in aluminium alloy, it can be mass-produced by using carbon fibre or glass reinforced plastic.



## CARPENTERS WORKSHOP GALLERY

Dutch artists Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta of Studio Drift bring an updated version of their classic *Fragile Future III* for their third participation at the fair. This light sculpture sees them use real dandelion seeds, fusing elements of nature with technology, a practice that is intrinsic to the duo's designs. Handpicked dandelion seeds are connected to LED lights, becoming light transmitters themselves, which are in turn connected to each other via bronze electrical circuits. Through this work, Studio Drift comment against mass production, offering a unique, labour-intensive work. *Fragile Future III* fuses two seemingly opposite materials in a "utopian vision of our planet's future", as the materials work together rather than against each other.

## SOUTHERN GUILD

For the *Bloom* table, South African designer John Vogel draws inspiration from the spring flowers of Namaqualand, an arid region of Namibia and South Africa, which bloom after the winter rainfall. Vogel explores the idea of transformation, through which the barren landscape changes into exuberant scenery every year. The designer, who has a background in architecture, draws his inspiration from nature and typically explores organic forms. This table's changing angles suggests liveliness and movement and various interconnected parts come together to form a functional surface. It is priced at \$9000–10,000.



## YMER&MALTA

French designer Benjamin Graindorge's bench, *fallenTree*, is made of sculpted oak wood a living material into an effective one. "The bench is intended to reveal the wood's DNA, to express its deepest nature by attempting to highlight the living fibre it is made of," says Graindorge. "I want to expose it and bring it to life to reveal its primal identity, which is strong, indomitable and above all, magnificent." The young designer is inspired by nature and Japanese philosophy and seeks to transmit emotion and spirituality through his designs, bringing together aesthetics and utility.

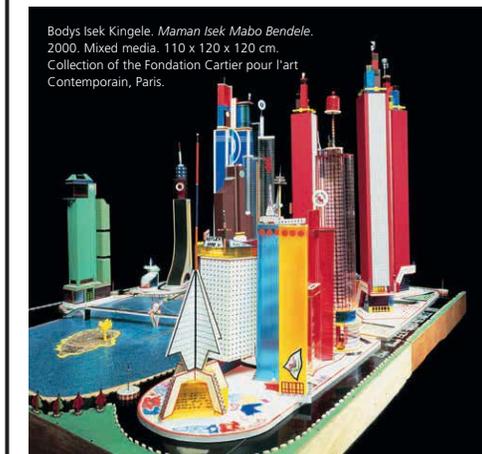
Benjamin Graindorge. *fallenTree*. 2013. Sculpted oak with a borosilicate glass leg. 110 x 273 x 120 cm (customisable). Limited edition of eight pieces, two prototypes and two artist's proofs per model. Image courtesy Ymer&Malta, Paris.



## J+A GALLERY

Represented by Dubai-based design space J+A Gallery, Iranian designer Shirin Ehya makes her first appearance at an international design fair with various pieces, including *Safa*, a chair made of wood and mirror work. Priced at \$4200, it is part of the *Isfahan* collection, which

sees Ehya incorporate crafts from her native Iran, which may be deemed kitschy today, with modern lines. She reveals their inner essence instead, focusing on sophisticated and simple shapes. "The juxtaposition of oriental and occidental aesthetics is a natural reflection of Shirin's dual sensibilities," says gallery Director Arne Augustini. "She is in a constant search for a balance between the two."



Bodys Isek Kingelez. *Maman Isek Mabo Bendele*, 2000. Mixed media. 110 x 120 x 120 cm. Collection of the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris.



City-inspired bracelet from the *L'Odysée de Cartier* collection in platinum, cushion-shaped diamonds and brilliants. Image courtesy Vincent Wulverlyck. © Cartier 2013.

# FANTASY LANDSCAPES

FRENCH LUXURY HOUSE and Art Dubai principal sponsor, Cartier, returns this year with *Maman Isek Mabo Bendele*, a unique creation by African artist Bodys Isek Kingelez. From 19–22 March, Cartier and the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain present Kingelez's colourful and imaginary city made from salvaged and delicate material. The theme of an urban space has inspired movement, geometric lines and modernity in the Maison's creation and design as well.

The artist juxtaposes his vibrant native city, Kinshasa, with a white city created by Cartier, which comprises the *L'Odysée de Cartier* collection of over 80 unique pieces. Visitors can experience the reality of Kinshasa and other metropolitan cities that have grown rapidly without any precise urban planning. Kingelez's work is humorous and carries a social message of compensating for what society has failed to provide us. [Read more](#)