

FURNISHINGS +
BY DESIGN

DAVID YUM ARCHITECTS



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FURNISHINGS + DESIGN

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introduction

Heading back from Seoul was not nearly as difficult as I thought. In prior visits, the fourteen hour flight had always been a bit agonizing. This time however, I needed the decompression and fourteen hours would only just begin that process. Unlike the past, this journey resembled the architectural tours I had made on my own, during my graduate school years. This time I was not on my own, but with the director and staff of the Il Chi Foundation. We had quite a remarkable trip, two and a half weeks in Korea and Japan. In particular, beyond just seeing, I was feeling the temples and historic houses. Through this, I not only was able to compare distinct developments of architecture, but also furniture. I was reminded of an idea from my school days, that within a piece of furniture, one can see the architecture of a building, and then a City and, then a culture of any given time and place. Perhaps this is one reason we have been drawn to furniture in our practice and, why garden, building, interior and finally, furniture, have formed both a continuous and complex strand in our thinking and aspiration.

Sukcho is on the east coast of Korea, almost directly east of Seoul. I had come to visit an Artist's home and studio. Rain poured down as we traveled the expressway from Incheon Airport. At the rest stop, where unlike the United States, the food is from local farms and really quite good, I had my bowl of bibim bop, a fried something, and paper cup of coffee. Rain beat down on the canopy as we observed a large group coming off a tourist bus. The group was entirely senior citizens, all dressed in brightly colored, high tech trekking gear. Gore-tex



jackets and pants, and thick black soled, race striped boots. I wondered how tough the terrain of Gangnam province would be but, my companions told me the outfits are as much fashion as function. A week later when I would return to Seoul, I would see that to be true, a certain tribe, middle aged and older, all wearing trekking gear in the city. On the surface, this is similar to an urban tribe of Brooklyn wearing Patagonia while getting down to mother earth basics; or another tribe in Manhattan, bracing for the winter sidewalks in Moncler

down. Fashion is as much about what we aspire to be doing as what is it that we actually do. Architecture has a similar dilemma, one that is perhaps easier to see in Furniture. Like all products we see in advertising, we see furniture advertised in the context of a captivating space, an illusion, a dream.

The impact of the Scholar in the life and culture of the Chosun dynasty is profound and immensely beyond this discussion. For quick insight, don't look toward Korean dramas, the furnishings are often historically inaccurate and assembled from a transporter gone wild. So, as my knowledge of the historic scholar grows, part of my sugary delight for KD's gets diluted, but I am sure few of the millions of viewers across 90 countries are bothered. In any case, much of the furniture that has survived this period and, that remains highly valued, comes from the Scholar's room. The Scholar's room was a

place for calligraphy, reading, writing, contemplation, and teaching. Sparse, organized, tidy, every piece of furniture had not only a function, but also was highly singular in the way that it would be used. A rigid, box-like pillow was intended for the asymmetrical leaning over to relieve the body from the fatigue of a prolonged upright position. A writing table would reveal its secret chamber, only after the precise sequence of operations. For an American, this description evokes qualities of Quaker furniture. Simplicity, function, economy. Certainly, aesthetic parallels can be found, at least in principle of creating objects. For the Asian, one senses the influence of Buddhism. Nothing beyond what is necessary exists in the room. Objects are not collected and displayed to show an accumulation of wealth, but rather a present moment of values and interests. The Shaker and the Scholar had different gods; for the Shaker, simplicity and directness came from seeking heaven first, shunning material excess, while for the Scholar, these same qualities were required minimize distractions of the outside world, to stay within the present moment, within one's present mind.

Both were driven to an honesty in the design of furnishings. This earnest expression of material, form and function compels many people today. We may have lost a truly comprehensive understanding of Chosun dynasty furnishings, but we do see that the furniture typologies are only abstract. In other words, a type does not follow a well defined pattern of palette, joinery or ornament. Instead, each piece tends to take variants of these and follow only principles of function and scale. The wide range within Scholar's furnishings make it nearly impossible to codify a style of locale, time or affiliation. The individual Scholar was highly important, not in creating a signature identity, but rather in shaping an ideological point of view. Herein, lies another key distinction in the Shaker comparison.

Temple architecture was not on my agenda for this trip.

However, along with antique furnishings, old temples are very important to the works in the Foundation. Most temples in Asia are built from wood, so to think of an old temple is really to think of an old site because maintenance and restoration keep these buildings in amazing condition. In Korea, temple architecture always defers to the site. The abstract principles are understood, but so is the individuality of each place, its present quality as one experiences that place. Within Sokcho, in Seorak San National Park, lies Sinheungsa, a beautiful temple, in the river valley of the steep, figured hills. Oriented to the east, the temple complex is laid out on a strict orthogonal grid. One moves through a controlled, linear progression of gateway, frame and door. The complex is open, logically rooted in the orthogonal geometry of the master plan made possible by an open flat area between the mountains, along the river gorge. Not far away, the mountain temple of Woljeongsa is tucked into a very steep hillside. It's



orientation cannot be true east, because the contours of the O-dae mountains, and the aspect toward the facing mountains shapes the passage moving through the site. We traveled on, and on the east coast itself, we came to the Naksansa temple. Lodged a top and amidst the steep cliffs, charged in the light and sound of the ocean's water. Sea wind whistles through the complex, the buildings are placed a bit farther apart. Winding through impossibly formed paths in the stone faces of the ocean cliffs, small temple buildings are completely off

the grid, but completely in harmony with the rock, the sun and the view. As in the furnishings of the Scholar's room, the temple is driven abstractly by clear principles, but ultimately, deferential to the individuality of a site, a context, a spirit.

We headed to Japan for a brief excursion to Naoshima and Kyoto. Our main time in Kyoto was just outside the city at the Taizo-in temple. Temples in Korea are richly colored. Temples in Japan are white, with lots of heavy framing timbers. In Korea, the temple walls have thick layers of grout between stones that approximate square; then rows of brick with equally thick and coarse lines of mortar. The walls at Taizo-in are crisp and smooth. The shadows of tree branches form precise silhouettes on these pristine vertical planes. One could feel the hand and see the individual placement of each stone on the Korean walls. In contrast, one could sense an abstraction in the five horizontals of Taizo-in, and imagine the meditations transposed between the lines. Mondrian felt he was capturing the universe in his compositions of the twenties and thirties. Then something happened in 1938 when he left for New York, and Broadway made him do a boogie-woogie. New York may have caused the Dutchman Rem Koolhaas a similar disruption that fostered his 1978 book, *Delirious New York*. Cities reflect the culture of a people and time; that impacts the artists and architects who experience and inhabit a city, who contemplate and produce the structures, spaces and objects that restore and expand the physical and conceptual urban body.

After my first two years in graduate school, I had to take a leave. Not just from school, but from the United States. One of my professor's from the GSD gave me this opportunity to work for Siza and then, Chipperfield in London. I had never known how American I truly was until I left for eighteen months. Being a foreigner helps one to understand one's home like nothing else. Though home sick, I strangely ended up in Rome for six months



before I returned to complete my degree in Cambridge. After a few months in Italy, I was conversational in Italian. The biggest shock I gave there was to two nuns I visited outside Rome. They had come from Korea seven and twelve years ago. Dying to feel home, they so desperately wanted to speak Korean with me. They were heartbroken when I, at that point, was more fluid in the tongue foreign to both of us, but the better bridge to actually relate to each other. All three of us gained perspective on being Korean, on what being Korean

meant, and what being Korean could mean to other people. With all that was crazy and spinning on this particular Asian trek, all that I seemed to lack, recalling this tale to my traveling companions gave me insight as well as some needed assurance that our ideas for the Il Chi Foundation could be meaningful.

Last Winter, there was an incredible exhibition on the Silla Dynasty at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. During that period, Koreans traded all the way out to the Roman empire, became connoisseurs of the finest Chinese porcelain and incorporated rituals of the Middle East into their own lives. This was a period of savvy international business men, quick learners of technology and early adapters of new cultures. Driving all these things was the expression of Silla culture through art and design. The trade route from Gyeongju to Rome must have been counted in years, a large chunk of a traveler's life 2000 years

ago. I was so entranced by this show, maybe because I realized I was discovering the character of first century Koreans as much as those in the twenty first century. Maybe I took heart knowing, as my cousin's husband said to me at dinner, that I too might share some of that DNA. As the ancient Silla traders returned, they must have had at a scale far larger than mine, feelings of home and far away, culture inherent and culture adopted. Great times of recounting must have ensued. In a sense, I had departed over a generation ago; so strangely, this time I felt that I never departed anywhere, I only returned twice. I think of the quest my father took us on, based on his generational family tales and tenuous research to find our roots outside Beijing, but I digress and that trek requires a different hat.

We visited many extraordinary contemporary works in Korea and Japan. I could not help but be incredibly impressed by the recent master works of Ando in Naoshima and Gangwon-do, the Seoul Design Center by Hadid and, Herzog de Meuron, Botta and Nouvel trying to play nicely together and the Leeum Museum. A new relative informed me, many of the older generation are quite proud that the economic forces in Korea could draw such prestigious Architects from around the globe. Still, I remained haunted by the ancient works. When Gehry visited Seoul, many say he was most impressed by Jongmyo, the memorial complex to the Kings of the Chosun dynasty. Solemn and austere, the buildings' weight and proportion dominate its expression. As I walked the tripartite stone paths, I realized procession, spirit, remembrance are all universal and timeless and, all powerfully felt at Jongmyo. Though it was built and attached to a particular era of politics and power, hundreds of years later, we experience the same burden of procession, remembrance of those who past, and the solemnity that fills the space between and within. In this way, great buildings and objects live beyond their day, beyond their place and even beyond their culture; continually expressing that which is universal, connecting us with the

past, providing a solid bulkhead for us to steer into the future.

So back to my trip. Back to my return. Back to why the furnishings we design at DYA, like our architectural work, never stay static. Certainly, continual change is not good for the evolution of a production process, nor a business. However, change, as T.H. White voices through Merlin, is the essential way we know something is alive. We see the City as dynamic, ever fascinating, ever responding to the larger world around it. Our furnishings, typically designed along side our buildings and interiors, are a distillation of the parti and ideas of that project. Furnishings reinforce and expand the expression of a project. As each program, each site and each client has spelled unique terms to each problem, and even if these would become a constant, our Work would still change in response to the changing of the City, today's Culture and our World.

David Yum





polyethylene sheets suspended from wood frame





macassar with white resin inlay and black glass inlay top



upholstered in embroidered linen



shown in wenge with cherry inlay and ebony base



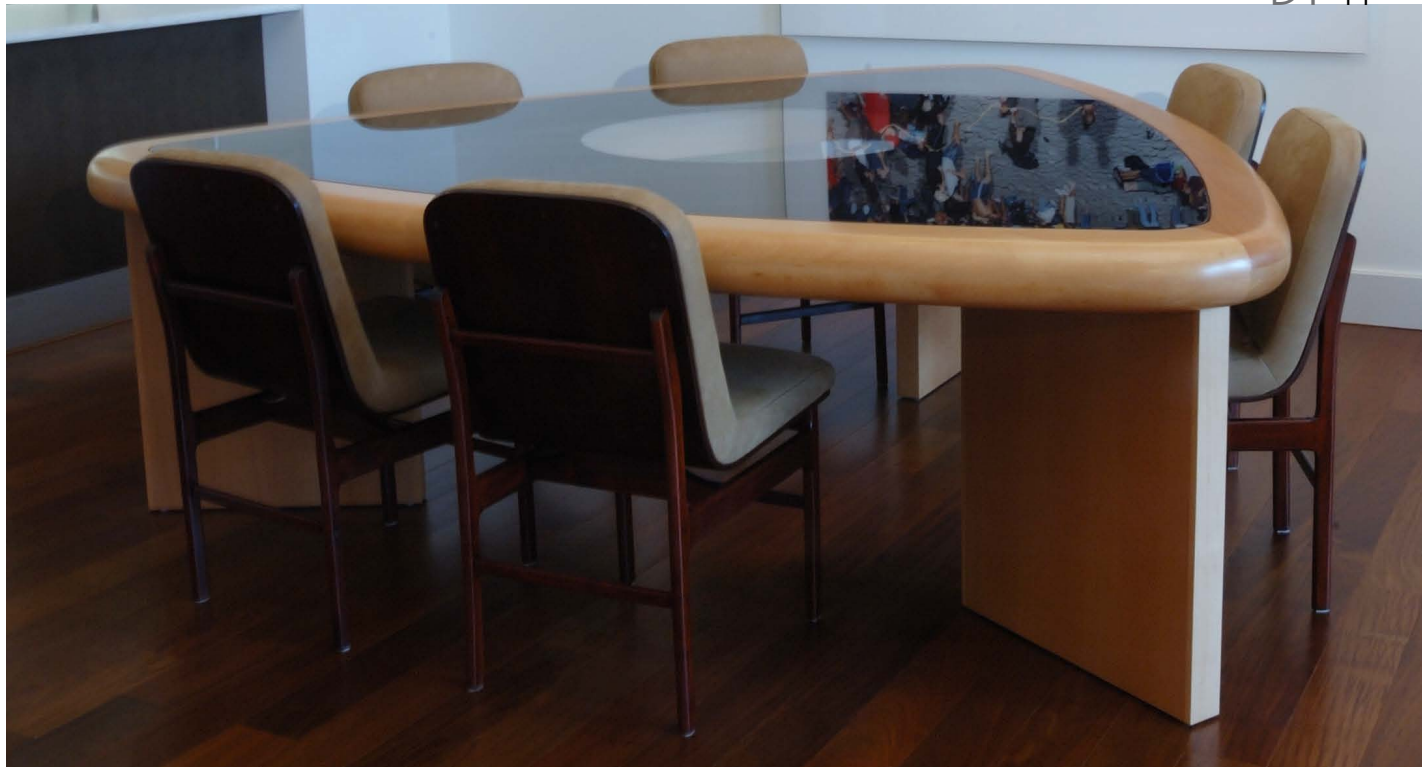


shown in ebony walnut



shown in bleached white oak with white glass





shown in maple with black glass top



shown in figure anigre with marble top



hand formed copper mesh and metallic paper in wood housing





shown in figured anigre with maple inlay, leather and upholstery





shown in figured anigr



upholstered in wool velour and mohair

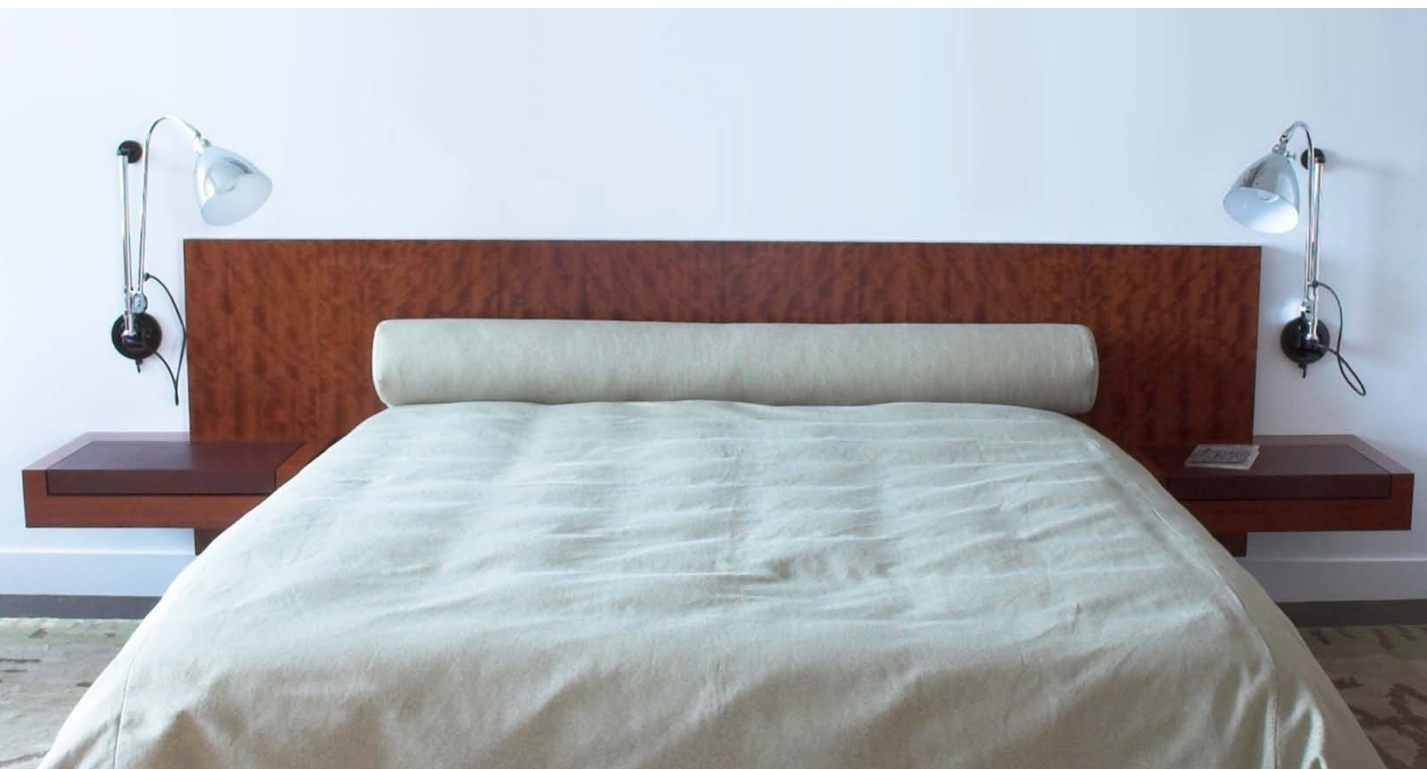


shown in figured bookmatched anigre



shown in upholstered leather and white onyx sliding tray

HB 11



shown in makore with leather inlay



shown in ebony walnut



shown in figured makore with leather inlay

R 13



hand tufted in silk and wool



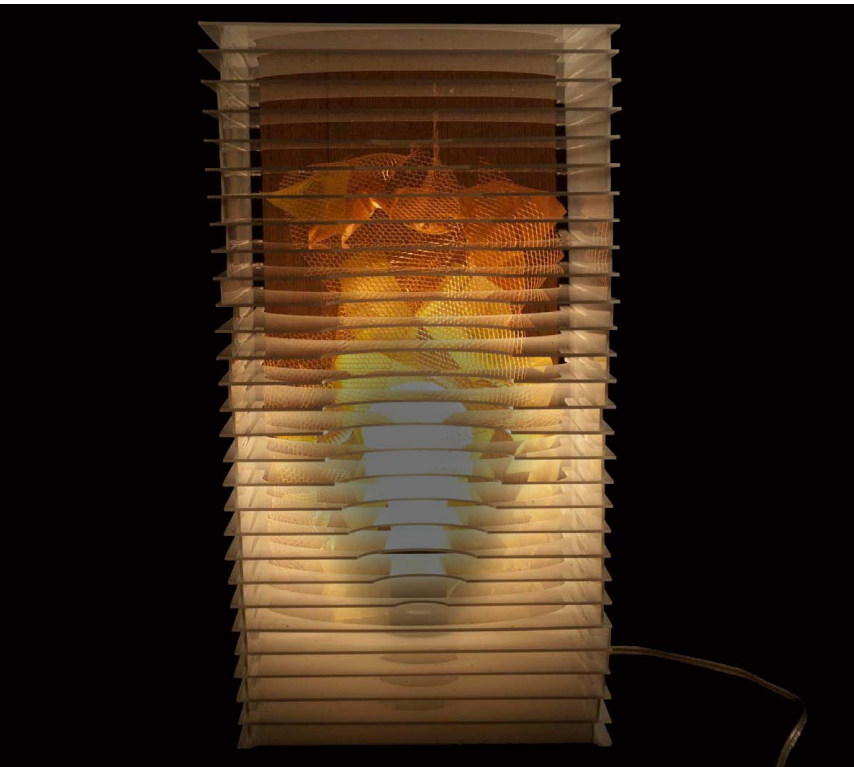
shown in corian with wood and leather inlay



shown in anigre, glass and steel



shown in figured anigre



hand molded copper mesh in white acrylic housing



walnut with white resin inlay with white glass top and chrome legs



shown in figured walnut with glass top



shown in figured anigre and white glass top

R 11
SF 11

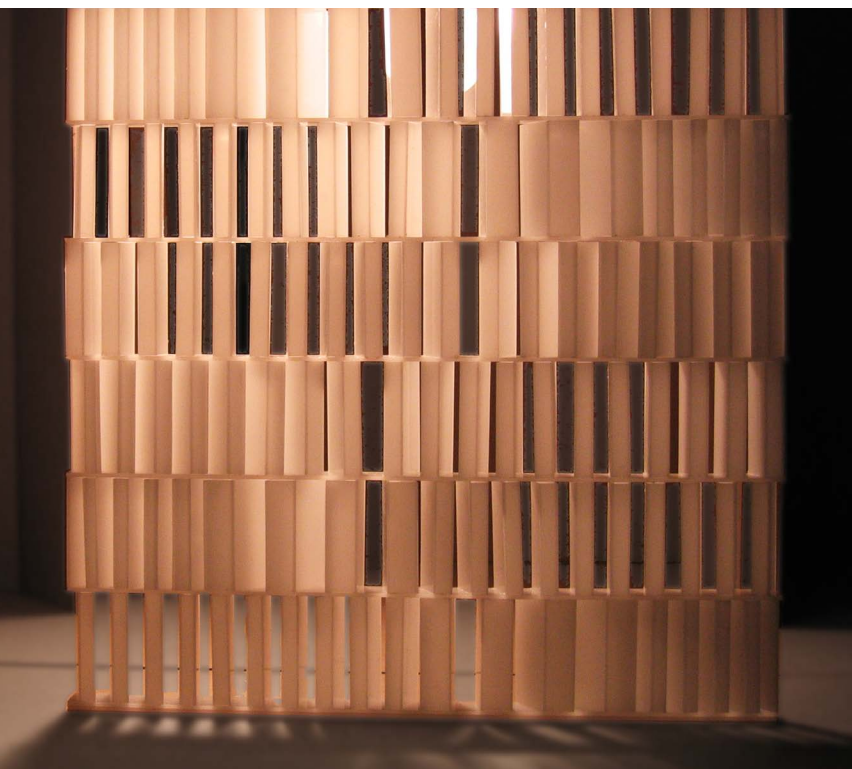
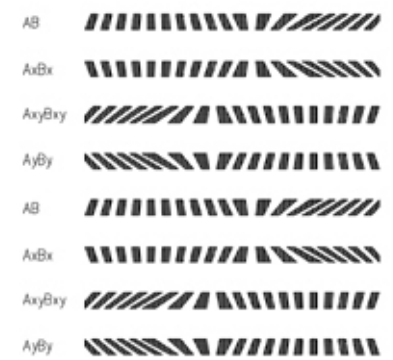


*SOFA upholstered in silk and wool
RUG hand tufted silk and wool*

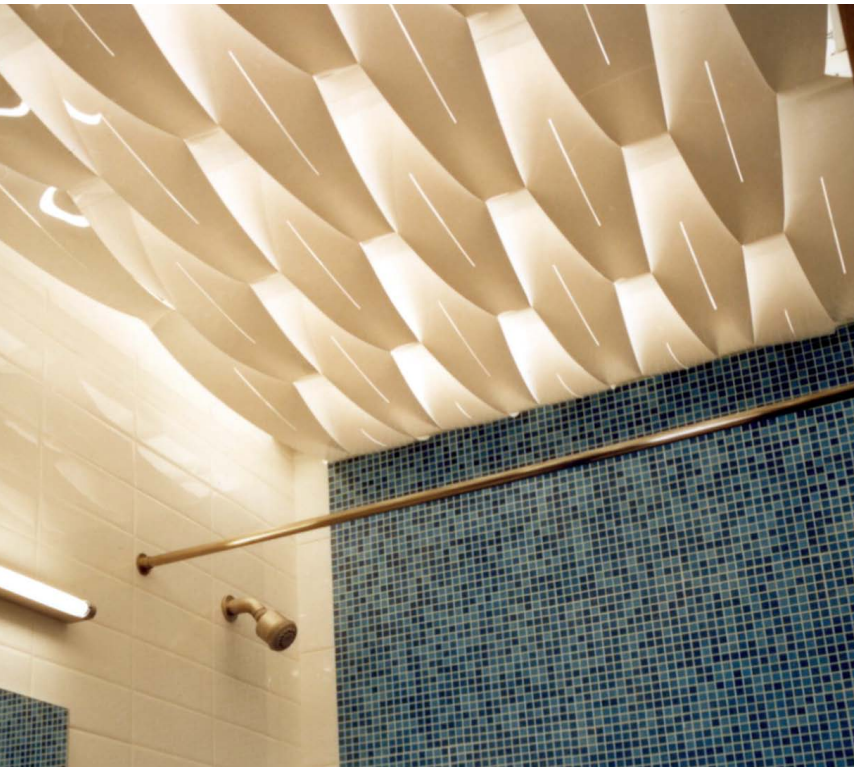


black marble top on polished chrome base

SN 11



poured white resin blocks



polyethylene sheets on aluminum and wood frame



sail canvas suspended from tubular steel frame



macassar inlay with white resin inlay on a polished chrome base



DT 17



walnut with white resin inlay with white glass top and chrome legs



shown in walnut with cherry inlay



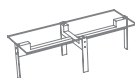
shown in figured french walnut with cherry inlay



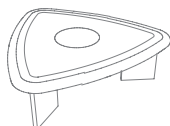
CT 11 COFFEE TABLE
3'3"D x 4'3"W x 1'2"H
p. 41



CT 13 COFFEE TABLE
1'5"D x 3'11"W x 1'2"H
p. 69



DT 11 DINING TABLE
5'7"D x 5'4"W x 2'6"H
p. 37, 39



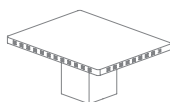
DT 13 DINING TABLE
3'9"D x 10'W x 2'3"H
p. 61



DT 15 DINING TABLE
diameter 4'6" x 2'6"H
p. 35



DT 17 DINING TABLE
4'1"D x 4'11"W x 2'5"H
p. 93, 95



ST 11 SIDE TABLE
10"D x 2'6"W x 2'4"H
p. 49, 51



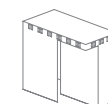
ST 13 SIDE TABLE
9"D x 1'8"W x 1'6"H
p. 79



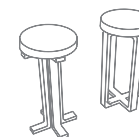
ST 15 SIDE TABLE
1'2"D x 1'8"W x 1'6"H
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ST 17 SIDE TABLE
2'D x 12"W x 2'0"H
p. 23, 25



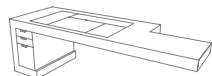
ST 19 SIDE TABLE
12"D x 12"W x 2'1"H
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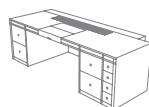
ST 21 SIDE TABLE
1'7"D x 1'11"W x 2'1"H
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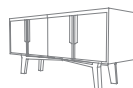
DK 11 DESK
2'9"D x 7'10"W x 2'4"H
p. 67



DK 13 DESK
2'10"D x 7'3"W x 2'3"H
p. 63



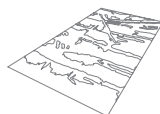
CR 11 CREDENZA
1'8"D x 5'2"W x 2'4"H
p. 33



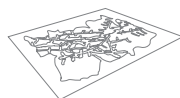
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TO ORDER
p. 81



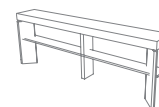
R 13 RUG
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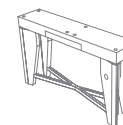
PT 11 PARSONS TABLE
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PT 15 PARSONS TABLE
1'2"D x 4'5"W x 2'5"H
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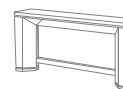
PT 17 PARSONS TABLE
1'1"D x 4'5"W x 2'5"H
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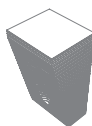
PT 19 PARSONS TABLE
1'1"D x 6'5"W x 3'10"H
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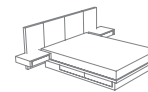
PT 21 PARSONS TABLE
9"D x 6'5"W x 2'6"H
p. 75



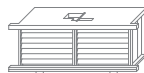
LM 11 LAMP
6"D x 8"W x 1'4"H
p. 73



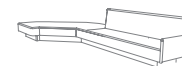
HB 11 HEADBOARD
7'1"D x 9'4"W x 11"H
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LM 13 LAMP
6"D x 1'2"W x 5"H
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SF 11 SOFA
6"D x 12'4"W x 1'3"H
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CN 11 CEILING COVER
TO ORDER
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SF 13 SOFA
diameter 4' x 2'6"H
p. 53



CN 13 CEILING COVER
TO ORDER
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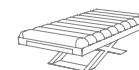
SF 15 SOFA
diameter 4'6" x 2'9"H
p. 27



CN 15 CEILING COVER
TO ORDER
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OM 11 OTTOMON
2'4"D x 4'0"W x 1'4"H
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SN 11 SCREEN
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p. 85



2000-2014

Current

Jessica Wilcock
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Miranda Rogers
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Michelle Black
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Michelle Komornik
Erica Lee
Siobhan Lowe
Supredee Parnicham
Ken Pollard
Rebecca Qing
Cathy Santos
Kate Speidel
Andrea Stempfle
Christian Truitt

David Yum, AIA received his Bachelor of Arts from Columbia College and his Master of Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The firm's work includes the renovation of the Leema building lobby in Seoul, the Joseph Silvestro Gallery in Williamsburg and, the restoration of a Landmarked McKim Mead and White house in Hyde Park.

David Yum Architects received a New York AIA Honor Award for the ELV Winery in Santa Barbara. DYA has also received a Merit Award in Design from The Boston Society of Architects and the Merit Award in Design Excellence from the New Jersey AIA. Architectural Record featured David Yum in its Emerging Architects section.

Mr. Yum has taught architectural design at Harvard University, NJIT, the Boston Architectural Center, and at FIT, where he received a Teaching Merit Award in 2004 and 2006. In 2011, David was the Sybil Bruel Scholar in the Attingham Trust Summer Program dedicated to the study and preservation of the English Country house. He has lectured at the Syracuse University, Taylor University, and the University of Michigan. He has been a guest critic at Arizona State University, the California College of Arts and Crafts, and the University of California at Berkeley.

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