

WEDNESDAY 22/10/25

MONOCLE MINUTE ON DESIGN

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COMMON THREADS

Connection and collaboration are the *fil rouge* of this week's Paris special, which kicks off with observations about craft and technology from Monocle's design editor, Nic Monisse. Elsewhere, we visit **biannual design festival Contributions** and architect **Charles Zana's artistic furniture collection** on Rue de Rivoli. We also focus on **the city's talented makers** through the lens of the *Monocle Design Directory* and admire sculptor **Philippe Hiquily's shell-inspired Coque chair** that's *shore* to be a hit with collectors.



OPINION: [NIC MONISSE](#)

On the same wavelength

Right now the most exciting creative centres are those that sit at the nexus of craft and technology. In Africa and Asia, cities such as Lagos and Jakarta are booming for this reason, as skilled manual workforces blend with rapidly developing economies. In Europe, it's Paris. The city's ateliers, adept at handicraft, sit alongside industrial-scale manufacturing.



It's a blend that's coming to the fore in the French capital this week, with Design Miami Paris – where design galleries present antique and vintage pieces, alongside new work – coinciding with Paris Art Week. Both are flanked by a host of smaller design-led events, such as Contributions (*see below*). Big players beyond the industry are getting in on the action too. Range Rover has a display at Design Miami Paris, while Apple's Designers of Tomorrow showcase features a host of young creatives who use the US tech firm's products to create bespoke pieces. "It shows that we're at an inflection point," says Design Miami's CEO, Jen Roberts, reflecting on both her fair and the industry at large. "Organisations such as Apple are recognising that the tools they're developing are being used by our market." Again, high-quality craft alongside new technology.



It's something that is exemplified by Paris-based design studio Marie et Alexandre, co-founded by Marie Cornil and Alexandre Willaume. The duo presented two custom-made items as part of Designers of Tomorrow: a modular totem that can be reconfigured to serve as a table or seat; and a vase made from thermoforming glass – a mould-making process, typically used to create plastic objects. "Our approach is artistic but practical," says Cornil. "We use craftsmen but keep industrial functionality in mind when making pieces. It's important to make sure that design is accessible by considering production and technology." In short, the duo strike a balance between humanity and technology by using industrial processes in new, unexpected ways.

It's something that Nifemi Marcus-Bello, who featured in Design Miami's first Paris show in 2023 and is part of Contributions this year, agrees with. "Rather than just accepting technology and having it shape our lives, we need to understand how to use it," he tells the Monocle Minute on Design. "It's about knowing how it will enhance what we already have and how we're already making things." It seems that the future of design, at least if you're in Paris this week, is one that uses technology to create considerably crafted products, connecting us at scale to the things that make us most human.

Nic Monisse is Monocle's design editor. For more insight and analysis, [subscribe](#) to Monocle today.