An installation view of Twenty First Gallery's group exhibition, *New Artists + Works*. From left: *Scène Familiale Floor Lamp*, 2023, by Emmée Parizot; *Conq Sofa*, 2023, by Rowin'Atelier; *Protoplasting Nature Chandelier 85*, 2024, by Marcin Rusak; *Auratus Stools*, 2025, by Géraldine Cornette De Saint Cyr; and *Bubble Vase III*, 2023, by Clotilde Ancarani. Left rear: *Totem 46464*, 2023 by Andrea Salvetti; Right rear: *Noyau Enfilad*, 2024, by Erwan Boulloud, and *Sconces*, 2023 by Joy de Rohan Chabot. Photo: Arturo Sanchez, courtesy Twenty First Gallery

Material Matters

New Artists & Works at Twenty First Gallery

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by Benjamin Genocchio

The most compelling works in *New Artists & Works*, Twenty First Gallery's summer group exhibition in New York, share a resistance to easy categorization. They may take the form of chairs, benches, cabinets, lighting, ceramics or wall pieces, but their ambitions extend beyond conventional ideas of furniture and decoration. Materials are manipulated, distressed, cast, carved and assembled until function becomes only one aspect of the object's identity.

Installation view of works by J McDonald: *Dichasium Mirror II*, 2026, black patinated aluminum and enameled copper. *Cube Variations 2*, 2021, painted cast aluminum, patinated brass. Photo: Arturo Sanchez, courtesy Twenty First Gallery

This is familiar territory for Twenty First, which has long occupied the fertile ground between contemporary art, craft and collectible design. But the arrival of four new artists—Yasmin Bawa, Elsa Foulon, Géraldine Cornette de Saint Cyr and Conie Vallese—adds fresh energy to the gallery's program. Presented alongside established gallery artists, they make this exhibition feel less like a seasonal survey and more like a statement about where contemporary design is heading. The connecting thread is material. Bronze, aluminum, copper, oak, clay, hemp, lime and plaster are treated not simply as substances from which objects are made but as generators of form. Evidence of casting, chiseling, carving, burning, weaving and patination remains visible. Rather than disguising fabrication in pursuit of seamless perfection, these artists frequently emphasize it.

Installation view of curved, organic works sculpted in hemp shiv and lime binder, layered with lime plaster and hand polished, by Yasmin Bawa. From left: *Laavu Coffee Table*, 2026; *Leir Mirror*, 2026, and *Tindra Floor Lamp*, 2026. Photo: Arturo Sanchez, courtesy Twenty First Gallery

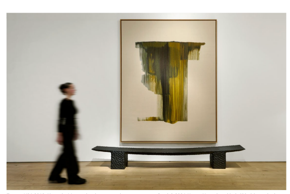
That approach is particularly apparent in the work of British-American artist Yasmin Bawa, based in Paris. Working with hemp, lime and plaster, Bawa makes objects whose rough, earthen surfaces seem closer to fragments of architecture than conventional furniture. Their strength lies in the tension between mass and softness: forms can appear substantial, even primitive, while their contours remain unexpectedly gentle. There is an ecological dimension to her choice of natural materials, but the work avoids becoming an illustration of sustainability. What matters is how those materials look and behave.

Window installation view of New Artists & Works at Twenty First Gallery. Glazed ceramic *Archi Stools*, 2025 by Elsa Foulon and glazed ceramic *Echinus Mirror*, 2025, by Géraldine Cornette De Saint Cyr. Photo: Arturo Sanchez, courtesy Twenty First Gallery

Elsa Foulon approaches ceramics differently. Her work demonstrates a careful negotiation between control and accident, precision and the unpredictability inherent in clay and firing. Ceramics have become ubiquitous in contemporary collectible design, but Foulon's work retains an appealing discipline. Process is evident without becoming the subject of the work itself.

Géraldine Cornette de Saint Cyr brings a more decorative sensibility to clay. Her richly worked surfaces draw on nature, historical craft and ornament, suggesting that decoration need not be treated as a guilty pleasure in serious contemporary design. There is pleasure in looking at these objects, in following their surfaces and discovering the small variations produced by hand. At a moment when so much collectible design depends on monumentality, her attention to detail feels refreshingly intimate.

The fourth newcomer, Argentine artist and designer Conie Vallese, works with bronze and botanical imagery, transforming forms associated with plants and flowers into objects of surprising physical authority. Bronze inevitably carries historical associations—with monuments, permanence and weight—but Vallese uses those expectations productively. Delicate natural forms become enduring, while the apparent vulnerability of botanical structures is translated into metal. The contradiction between fragility and strength gives the work its tension.



Tapestry N36, 2019, Alexandra Mocanu, hand woven wool on cotton canvas. *Bench 2*, 2024, Kaspar Hamacher, chiseled black burned oak. Photo: Arturo Sanchez, courtesy Twenty First Gallery

The newcomers benefit from being shown alongside artists with longer relationships to Twenty First: Erwan Boulloud, Kaspar Hamacher, Hubert Le Gall, Joy de Rohan Chabot, and Marcin Rusak, among others, have distinctive and recognizable approaches to materials and fabrication. Their presence gives the exhibition continuity while also revealing how broadly the gallery now defines its territory.

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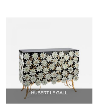

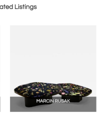

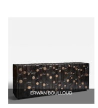

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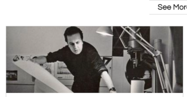

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