

## EXHIBITIONS

New York Dispatch / March 2022

## Hélène de Saint Lager and Simone Bodmer-Turner turn heads this spring with their solo shows, brimming with playful self-expression.

Simone Bodmer-Turner: 'Take Part In'  
Matter Projects  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> April

Hélène de Saint Lager: 'Aleatory Shapes'  
Twenty First Gallery  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> March

By Adrian Madlener / 1st March 2022



Simone Bodmer-Turner, 'Take Part In'  
COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

IT'S BEEN SAID again and again, but hopefully, this time it's true: New York is back. Even the most cautious of people are ready to shed their KN95 masks and return to a pre-pandemic "normal". The city's endless array of art and design platforms are gearing up for a promising late winter and early spring season, as the light at the end of the tunnel seems to appear.



## Top reads of the week



## PEOPLE

**Amauri Aguiar**

"Collectible design has always been a very niche segment, but its continued growth has been the driving force pushing new trends."

By Adrian Madlener



## PEOPLE

**Robert Wilson:** "A chair is for me like sculpture, I like to look at it in space and to see it from different sides. I do not see chairs as having any function other than that."

By Paul Clemence



## EXHIBITIONS

**Objects of Desire:** A seductive argument for Surrealism's role in the history of design.

By Emma Crichton-Miller



Hélène de Saint Lager, 'Aleatory Shapes'  
COURTESY: Hélène de Saint Lager & Twenty First Gallery / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

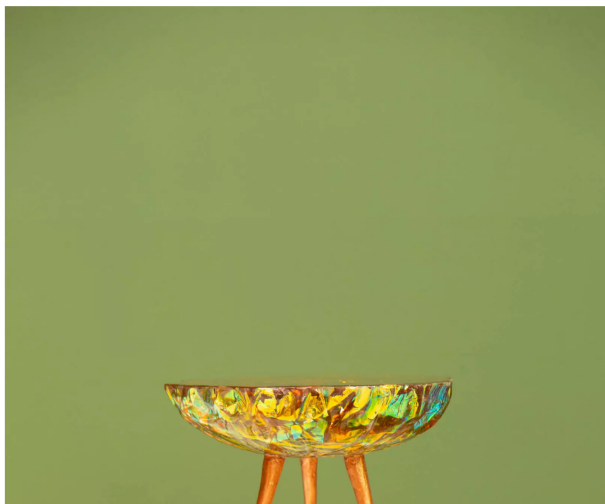
With so many pushing the opening of their main title shows to this month, a robust line-up of museum exhibitions, gallery showcases, pop-ups and installations are offering quality in quantity. Through it all, there appears to be a strong focus on women and BIPOC talents – and rightfully so. For too long, these artists and designers have been overlooked. From a Faith Ringgold retrospective at the New Museum, and Jennie C. Jones's minimalist compositions at The Guggenheim, to the Sadie Barnette's reconstitution of The New Eagle Creek Saloon (the first Black-owned gay bar in San Francisco) at The Kitchen, the narrative is clear.



Simone Bodmer-Turner  
COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

Through numerous exhibitions and anthologies, including the 'Here We Are! Women in Design' survey show currently at Vitra Design Museum and Jane Hall's recently-released Phaidon compendium *Woman Made: Great Women Designers*, there's a growing awareness of the gender and racial disparity that continues to prevail in the industry. Within the scope of New York's eclectic array of design galleries, designers like Katie Stout (on view at R & Company) and Charmaine Bee (showing at Emma Scully Gallery) have entered the spotlight.

TDE's New York correspondent, Adrian Madlener, highlights two solo shows of contemporary women designers who work at the crossroads of craft and experimentation.





Hélène de Saint-Lager, 'Alcatoro Shapes'  
COURTESY: Hélène de Saint-Lager & Twenty First Gallery / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

**Simone Bodmer-Turner: 'Take Part In'**

In just a few short years, ceramicist Simone Bodmer-Turner has taken the contemporary design world by storm. Her articulate vessels, sculptures and furnishings stem from a deep understanding of Japanese and Mesoamerican craft. And yet, her particular brand of organicism appears to transcend these traditions with an amorphous quality all its own.



Simone Bodmer-Turner, 'Take Part In'  
COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

The Brooklyn-based talent operates in both the serial production and one-off spheres, while imagining works that defy portion and champion whimsical interpretation. Formal exploration, fluidity and tactility are at the core of her practice.





Simone Bodmer-Turner, 'Take Part In'  
 COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

"The reason I am so drawn to this medium (clay) is because of the tactile, quiet interactivity of building each piece. It is rare to create something merely by touch, without protective gloves or loud, chaotic machinery, in such an intimate way," she explains. "I like building furniture out of this same material because it forces the viewer to interact with the piece – to pull on the suspended ball to turn the light on, to grasp the seed-shaped knob to extrude a drawer from a colossal mass of geometric shapes. There's some small delight and whimsy that I find in that. It's like being a child and getting to touch something even though you're not supposed to."



Simone Bodmer-Turner, 'Take Part In'  
 COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

Mounted at Matter, 'Simone Bodmer-Turner: Take Part In' is the emerging designer's first solo show. The exhibition comprises 25 new works conceived to push the properties of ceramics to new heights and scales. Works on view range from a credenza of grid-anchored sphere-drawers – labelled for different contents – to large scale lamps with a fresh take on the age-old ball pull chain. Matter's Broome Street storefront is currently emblazoned in a sea of textured stoneware and captivating shapes.



Simone Bodmer-Turner, 'Take Part In'  
 COURTESY: Simone Bodmer-Turner & Matter Projects / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

#### Hélène de Saint Lager: 'Aleatory Shapes'

"It's these random forms that are closest to what nature gives us to see, not geometric forms, but fluid movements," Hélène de Saint Lager describes. "Materials and sediment are veritable obsessions. I spread layer after layer of resin and toss lightweight materials on top – dollops, shavings, bits of holographic film. Time stops. I create and freeze it in a mould, like the cube."



time stops. I capture and freeze it in a mirror, ice-like cube.



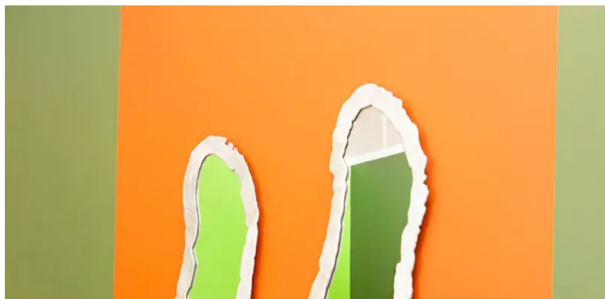
Hélène de Saint Lager: 'Aleatory Shapes'  
COURTESY: Hélène de Saint Lager & Twenty First Gallery / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

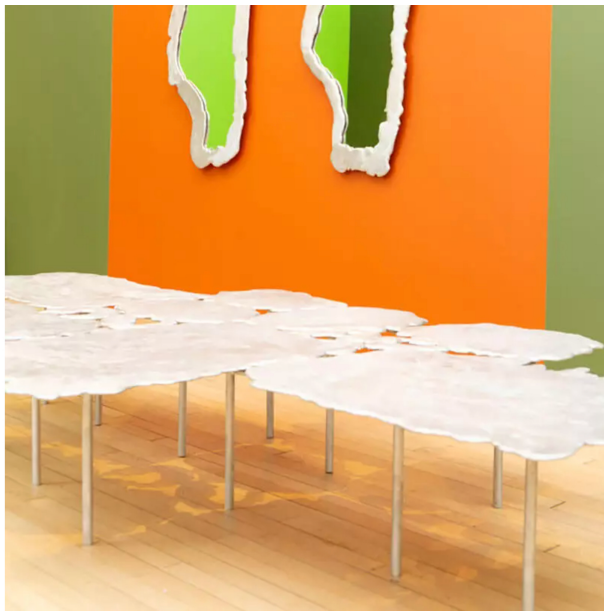
The Paris-based polymath has had a diverse – albeit formative – career working in the creative realms of painting, restoration, millinery, sculpture and metalwork. For the past two decades, however, the craft-minded designer has gone rogue, so to speak. Pushing, prodding and distilling these entrenched artisanal traditions in new ways, Saint Lager has formulated a beguiling practice all her own.



Hélène de Saint Lager: 'Aleatory Shapes'  
COURTESY: Hélène de Saint Lager & Twenty First Gallery / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

Taking experimentation to the next level, she transforms mundane materials in unexpected ways. Her ongoing quest to freeze-frame otherwise undetectable chemical processes in tangible applications – chairs, tables, mirror frames and jewellery – allows her to celebrate the unconstrained and raw nature of composites such as aluminium, gold leaf and resin. Roughly-hewn edges are juxtaposed by semi-translucent pools infused with shimmering and colourful particles. Saint Lager's work gives new meaning to the term "process-driven", as the formation of her pieces are almost always left to chance.





Hélène de Saint Lager, 'Aleatory Shapes'  
COURTESY: Hélène de Saint Lager & Twenty First Gallery / PHOTOGRAPH: Marco Galloway

On view at Twenty First Gallery, the 'Aleatory Shapes' exhibition is the designer's first show in the United States. Presented in colour-block vignettes staged by French scenographer Jean de Piépape, a comprehensive selection of works including the 'Alualéorie Table' and 'Cadre Fleurs Coffee Table' are on view in the expansive Tribeca venue. A new collection of wall-hung, hand-tufted carpets also joins the display.

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#### Article by Adrian Madlener

Adrian Madlener is a Brussels-born, New York-based writer covering a wide range of design-related topics.

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By TDE Editorial Team



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By Adrian Madlener



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By Natalie Kovacs



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