



Detail of designer Marcin Rusak's Flora Cabinet 176;

ONES TO WATCH

Natural Beauties

Design Miami

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Three standout designers inspired by—and working with—nature



Today's most exciting designers innovate on multiple levels at once. Case in point? The talents below aren't just pushing the discipline's boundaries through material and technical experimentation, they're also centering their practices around our relationship to Mother Earth. Read on for a dose of green design inspiration.

Marlène Huissoud



Top: Marlène Huissoud's Frozen Bench; Photo courtesy of Sarah Myerscough Gallery | Bottom: Huissoud's Cocoon Cabinet #4 and Cocoon Wardrobe; Photos © Marlène

Raised in the rural French Alps as the daughter of a beekeeper, Marlène Huissoud has always felt a strong connection to nature. The experimental French designer's practice explores the vast potential of the insect world, "using insects as co-partners in the design process," as she puts it, to create surprising, museum-worthy furniture and objects. Working with materials such as honeybee resin and [silkworm cocoons](#), Huissoud's intricate work points to a treasure trove of untapped biomaterial possibilities all around us, asking us to reconsider our relationship to—and impact on—the environment in which we live. As Huissoud tells us, "Bio-materials are inspirational, educational tools that reveal paths toward a different, more balanced future."

Marcin Rusak



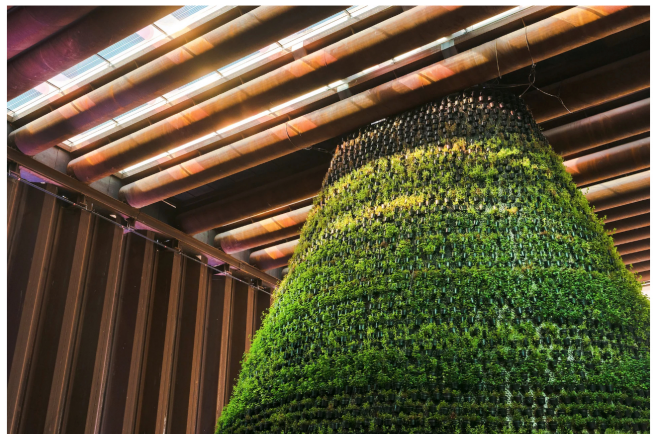
Top: Marcin Rusak's Flora Cabinet 176 in Black; Photo courtesy of Twenty First Gallery | Bottom: Rusak's Flower Infused Vessel 04; Photo courtesy of Sarah Myerscough Gallery

Experimental Polish designer [Marcin Rusak](#) also approaches nature as both medium and message. He crafts striking, refined objects from decaying organic elements, which comment on issues ranging from sustainability and

transformation to consumer culture and beyond.

Take, for example, his ongoing series Flora and Perma, for which Rusak sources discarded flowers from the floral industry, extending their life cycles by combining petals, stems, and buds in molded resin to create a solid composite material; the results are simultaneously gorgeous design objects and potent critiques of the industry's wastefulness. Rusak's inventive approach is also evident in Protoplasting Nature, a lighting and furniture series in which he preserves leaves in metallic casing, as well as in his Flower Infused Vessels, which are inlaid with flowers and leaves turned to ash during the glassblowing process. Throughout his practice, Rusak captures and reframes the natural world in unexpected ways that allow for closer inspection and reflection.

Marjan Van Aubel



Top: Sunne by Marjan van Aubel Studio, a solar-powered light that calls to mind the sunrise and sunset | Bottom: van Aubel's stained-glass-like, solar panel skylight for the Dutch Pavilion at World Expo Dubai 2020; Photo © buroBelén. Both images courtesy of Marjan van Aubel Studio

Dutch Designer Marjan van Aubel's practice focuses on integrating solar energy into our everyday environments, with the larger aim of making solar power more accessible to everyone. Her award-winning work—which is included in the permanent collections of the MoMA, V&A, Vitra Design Museum, and other prestigious institutions—frequently asks: “Why can't energy be beautiful too?”

Projects range from Sunne, a new solar light that captures the sun's energy and mimics its glow, thereby evoking the sunrise



*Detail of designer Marcin Rusak's Flora Cabinet 176;
Image courtesy of Twenty First GalleryBlack-Detail*

sun's energy and mimics its glow—thereby evoking the sunrise and sunset within your home—to clever tables and stained glass windows composed of solar cells that simultaneously delight the eye and power your electronics. Throughout her work, the self-dubbed “solar designer” deftly combines the worlds of technology, design, and sustainability with an eye towards a more environmentally sound—and beautiful—future. ♦

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