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DESIGNERS IN DIALOGUE, ROWIN ATELIER

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In this seventh episode of Designers in Dialogue, we proudly present the portrait of Frédéric and Hervé, the two talented designers behind RoWin'atelier. Driven by a cross-disciplinary vision of space, RoWin'atelier explores materials, light, and the intimate relationship between objects and their environment. The C O N Q sofa, our latest collaboration, perfectly embodies the excellence of craftsmanship and the pursuit of discreet luxury, where every detail tells a story.

Photo : Studio ZILIZOU, Zhou SHA, 2025

To start off this interview, could you take us back in time and tell us a little about your background?

RoWin'atelier was born from a cross-disciplinary approach blending architecture, design, and the craftsmanship of art. Our journey has been shaped by a desire to explore space in all its dimensions, while considering the scale of architecture just as much as that of furniture. We have always had a strong interest in materiality, the relationship between volume, light and how objects blend into their environment. Our past experiences have allowed us to collaborate with master craftsmen, art casters, cabinetmakers, and upholsterers, taking on an approach in which attention to detail and quality of execution are essential.

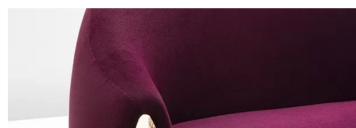
As architects, do you often get to design furniture, particularly sofas?

*Our architectural practice naturally leads us to design furniture. We believe that **a project doesn't stop at the walls** but extends to everything that shapes a given space: the layout, furniture, textures, and materials. The Conq Sofa reflects this approach, in which each piece of furniture is conceived as an architectural element in its own right—an extension of space that interacts with its surroundings. Designing a sofa is a unique challenge, as it must balance aesthetics, comfort and proportion while maintaining a sculptural presence within an interior.*



Does the name of your creation, the Conq Sofa, hold a particular meaning or symbolism that is important to you?

*All our creations bear four-letter names, forming tetragrams. This choice is a signature that runs throughout our work. These names often reference either the shape of the object or the first client for whom it was designed. In the case of the Conq Sofa, its name directly **echoes the shape of the bronze inserts that structure the piece.***



This link between materiality and identity reflects our approach, and each creation carries a visual and symbolic resonance. Visually, this is expressed through curved lines that converge at carefully sculpted angles of angles, a signature that runs



contranea points of tension, a structure that rests on a strong, assertive base while maintaining a sense of fluidity in its form. It also conveys a certain power and sculptural presence while inviting relaxation and comfort.

Can you tell us about the origins of the concept of this sofa? What inspired you to design its unique shapes?

The inspiration behind this piece is deeply rooted in the history of 20th-century decorative arts. We believe that creation does not emerge ex nihilo, but every piece is built upon an artistic and cultural heritage. In our approach, the history of decorative arts serves as a true abecedarium of forms, a kind of toolbox that allows us to recompose, reinterpret, and reinvent stylistic universes.

*For this particular piece, we drew inspiration from several major references like **Jean Royère** and his iconic Ours Polaire, for its enveloping and organic lines, **Pierre Paulin**, whose incredible creativity seamlessly blended boldness and comfort, **Vladimir Kagan** or **Gio Ponti**, emblematic figures of international design, who deeply influenced the relationship between sculptural forms and functionality.*

*Beyond these aesthetic references, **comfort was an absolute priority**. We finalized the design using virtual reality to optimize every curve and inclination, to ensure a perfect seating experience. No matter how exclusive a sofa is, it must first and foremost be functional. The curves of the armrests, the shape of the backrest, and the head support were meticulously refined to strike a balance between design and ergonomics, offering a true invitation to relax.*



With bronze inserts and an alpaca velvet covering, a particular attention to the materials can be observed. What is the origin of this approach?

Materiality is at the heart of our approach. We believe that a piece of furniture is not only experienced through its form, but also through touch, the light it captures, and the way it interacts with the space. We sought to balance these elements to create a piece where the excellent savoir-faire of craftsmen blends with a contemporary approach to design.

In general, do you regularly call upon craftsmen in your work? Is this an aspect that you particularly appreciate?



*Yes, craftsmanship is fundamental to our approach. We regularly work with cabinetmakers, founders, upholsterers, and skilled metalworkers. The exchanges with these craftsmen are essential because each material imposes its own constraints and intelligence. We enjoy this collaboration as it allows us to **push the boundaries of traditional savoir-faire** while integrating them into a contemporary reading of design and architecture. The craftsmen bring rich technical skills and a valuable perspective on the details that give an object its uniqueness.*

Do you already have new furniture projects in mind for 2025?

*Yes, several projects are currently in preparation for 2025, always with an approach in which excellent craftsmanship is at the heart of the process. We are currently working on a **project of a bespoke shoe design embroidered with Maison Felger**, an exceptional house whose savoir-faire aligns with our vision of working when it comes to materials and detail. We are **also developing a collection of lighting fixtures in collaboration with Véronese**, an iconic house known for its blown glass work.*

*We are also considering **new seating lines and furniture pieces**, depending on the time available to bring them together. Time is a crucial factor in our practice. It not only adds societal value to the objects, but it is also inseparable from the pursuit of beauty, precision, and fine finishes. It is there, for us, that true luxury resides. A luxury that is not measured by opulence, but by the excellence of gesture, the accuracy of proportions, and the depth of materials, worked with the time they need.*

Finally, could you share with us a key moment in your career that particularly left a mark on you?

*Since we began creating decorative art, several significant moments have shaped our journey. One of the most notable was in 2017 when we presented, alongside our gallery owner and publisher at the time, Alexandre Guillemain, **our first collection at the PAD Paris**. That year, we had the honor of winning **Contemporary Design Prize**.*



It might sound like just another award from an art fair, but what deeply moved us was that this recognition was given to us by our peers: Pierre Yovanovitch, India Mahdavi, Vincent Darré, Sarah Poniatowski Lavoine, Marta Sala, and many other iconic figures in design and decoration. Whether we want to or not, this acknowledgment holds **immeasurable value in our eyes**, far beyond the visibility or notoriety that may have followed.

Another key moment was our collaboration with the French team at the **Bocuse d'Or in 2018**, where we had the opportunity to be the **official designers**. It was a breathtaking plunge into the world of haute cuisine, an intense experience where we interacted with renowned chefs, sharing their rigor, creativity, and passion. This encounter in a world where excellence and precision are paramount was a true delight for us.



Since that experience, **we have adopted the same attention to detail and the quest for the perfect balance between shape, material, and use**. We have always been inspired by creators like Cristóbal Balenciaga, both in the search for shapes, the choice, or even the creation of materials, as well as in the attitude that creation entails: remaining humble, human, and discreet, letting the work speak for itself.

This exchange with RoWin'atelier allowed us to delve into the heart of a vision in which architecture, design, and craftsmanship intersect to bring singular creations to life. Their perspective on material, light, and space reveals a rare sensitivity, guided by the demand for detail and the search for a balance between shape and function. Through their words, we sense an authentic passion for **precise gesture, discreet beauty, and the richness of craftsmanship collaborations**. Thank you for sharing this precious moment, which represents for us a true source of recognition and inspiration.

Sofa and armchair specially made by les ateliers Jouffre and distributed exclusively by Twenty First Gallery in New York.



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