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# NEUE LUXURY™

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Images courtesy of LMD Studio.

# LUKAS MACHNIK

*A curator's art*

## DESIGN

By Paul Tierney

Lukas Machnik is far more than the sum of his parts. In myriad ventures—interior design, furniture, objects, art—the Chicago-based Pole imbues his work with the eye of an auteur. Avant-garde, haunting, graphic, bold—these are handy commercial adjectives, and yet this is how you might describe the Machnik aesthetic, the ability to cross-reference and stamp personality onto a project with a profound disregard for convention. In essence, he is the very definition of a renaissance man. “I’ve heard that term used to describe me,” he says, “but I don’t define myself with this label. I just do things that bring me joy. For me, merging art, design and architecture is natural. I see myself as a lifestyle creator.”

With new century optimism, Machnik set up his design practice in 2000, remodeling the homes of adventurous clients into imposing spaces. But these were not ephemeral make-overs, rather grand up-scaling projects that took the lines of architecture and married them to the artist’s eye. “Everything stems from attraction and ideas,” he explains. “In the ancient world there was no distinction between art and design. Everyday objects could be works of art and were portrayed as such. I am attracted to materials like concrete, plywood, bronze and glass, and figures such as Carlo Scarpa, Le Corbusier, Richard Serra and Donald Judd to name a few. I relate to their work. I don’t like assembly lines and mass production.”

He is a collaborator at heart, happy to use craftsmen to help build his vision, and willing to showcase the talents of others. His LMD offshoot, a web space where he curates and sells the work of his contemporaries, is a world unto itself—a shrine to modernity and form. It’s a place where the furniture line of Rick Owens sits comfortably next to a classic Eames as well as the mesmerizing wall light installations of Charlotte Perriand. “It’s all about lifestyle,” he says. “Like the Bauhaus ideals of total design, it’s about simplifying complexity.”

**PAUL TIERNEY:** You say you’re an interior designer with an artist’s sensibility. Can you expand on that?  
**LUKAS MACHNIK:** It’s just another label. I am not one over the other. I am all of these things in equal measure. I am an artist, designer, producer and architect. But at the end of the day I identify with the idea of curation. A curator takes all of these disparate ideas, forms and materials and makes them work together.  
**PT:** Your work has been described as ‘dark tech minimalism’. How comfortable are you with that description?

**LM:** It’s very hard to comprise a vocabulary to describe my work. I don’t think my design ideology exists in a word. It’s not minimalism, it’s not avant-garde—these things are simply reference points. As far as technology goes, I do apply it to certain aspects of my work. However I feel very strongly connected to ancient artisanal techniques. Technology is something that I have been working with, especially in my collaboration with Evan Sugerman, Parts of Four Home (P4H). The idea for P4H is a scaled-up version of Evan’s jewellery line Parts of Four. In our design process, a brutalist quartz crystal necklace transforms into a massive illuminated crystal ceiling pendant.

**PT:** That doesn’t sound very minimal.  
**LM:** A lot of people think of minimalism as an aesthetic, whereas in my view minimalism represents a lifestyle. Clean lines architecturally present a platform or a stage upon which you present things that are important to you. It is about this uncluttered environment where you conceal the unnecessary. As for color, to me black, white and grey contain a multitude of nuanced and subtle colors. It is not about ‘pops’ of colour. Rather, the colour exists in the black.

**PT:** What does the work say about you?  
**LM:** That’s a tricky question. My work and I go hand in hand. What I release is what I feel inside. It’s basically a reflection of my personality, passions and ideas. It is very seamless. There is no disconnection between my work and myself. I embody the lifestyle that I create.

**PT:** How does the mantle ‘the bad boy of design’ sit with you?  
**LM:** (Laughs) “it’s what I’ve been called. Years ago, the ideas that I was presenting seemed to be controversial, whereas now they have become more acceptable. Being a pioneer is about presenting ideas without censoring yourself, which is probably the mentality that inspired the nickname. Personally I don’t think that anything I’ve done is so extraordinary or groundbreaking, I just did what I liked. People just didn’t know what to say about it, so it became convenient to label me a rebel. Now I just laugh at it.”

**PT:** Tell me about your feelings on identity. Is it a fluid, ever-changing concept, or something set in stone?  
**LM:** Identity is such a fluid notion. We constantly change and evolve. There is always going to be a common thread that ties and bonds what we do. However I don’t believe in just doing one thing your entire life. You have to branch out and try different things, and these things are going to drive the evolution of your identity. But of course it is always important to stay true to your beliefs and not

be led astray by trends; to believe in your own truth.

**PT:** Describe your mindset in terms of breaking rules.  
**LM:** Rules in general are meant to be broken and boundaries are meant to be pushed. If I can’t find a way I will make my own. It’s about being creatively challenged, not going for the easy way out, and trying not to replicate particular aesthetics. Staying within the boundaries of existing rules sometimes just isn’t challenging enough.

**PT:** Tell me about your inspirations—who informs your taste?  
**LM:** Each creator I hold in high regard has an iconic sensibility with how they work with materials and transform the world. At the beginning of their careers they shocked people, pushed boundaries and created something timeless. For example, Donald Judd pioneered art with simple forms and shapes, and Le Corbusier took concrete to another level. Of course there are also my contemporaries: Rick Owens and Michèle Lamy. All of these influences have a very strong singular point of view that is unattained. That is what I admire about them.

**PT:** Can you talk about your clients—what type of person wants LMD?  
**LM:** My clients have very sophisticated and discerning taste. They know exactly what they want, and in that sense they are collectors of LMD. They want the specific and unique lifestyle that LMD delivers through art, architecture and design. We are very involved with our clients, and our general mentality has always been less is more. I don’t take on projects just to take on another project. As the client interviews me for a project, I also interview the client. I am at a point where I can choose who I work with. Moving forward, it is very important that I don’t compromise my integrity. It’s not that I want to be unavailable, I’m just saying that I’m not going to break form and do a ‘red room’ or something just because it’s on-trend (laughs).

**PT:** How do you approach an interior? Is there a methodology that you follow?  
**LM:** The space itself will dictate what direction I will go in. It all depends on the age and style of the structure. I begin the design process by listening to what this building has to say to me, and then mix those ideas with the wants and needs of the client. This is where the craziness begins, I take all these ingredients and I follow them intuitively. But it’s never just about aesthetics; it’s also about function. It has to have all of the ingredients that make it a home. I don’t just want to build monuments to myself.

**PT:** Can we discuss the development of your current and future projects and collaborations?

**LM:** There are numerous projects that we have been working on for a number of years that will be revealed soon. We launched LMD/ studio in Chicago (and its subsequent online platform) and we’re reaching a worldwide audience with Parisian based P4 – LMD, the brainchild of Evan Sugerman and myself. This is where you’ll find our collaborative work alongside works from artists and designers including Rick Owens, Michèle Lamy and Lonney White. Additionally, Evan and I launched our second P4H collection in December 2015. We mixed in new materials like brass and bronze with materials from the first P4H collaborations. The pieces included limited edition conceptual lighting assemblies with smaller objects. We delivered something fresh and unseen, which was the goal from the beginning because we didn’t want to produce things that were fashionable and widely disseminated; the aim was to produce our own interpretation of what we love to do. We work together so seamlessly, with Evan’s engineering and technology skills and both our design sensibilities. The end result, in my opinion, has been spectacular.



**PAUL TIERNEY**

Paul Tierney is a long-serving writer and editor with a keen interest in music and popular culture. A regular contributor to *Another Man*, the *London Evening Standard* and *Love*, he is also Editor at Large of *Ponystep* magazine.



**LUKAS MACHNIK**

Lukas Machnik is an interior designer working between Chicago, Paris, New York and Miami. Machnik is also a fine artist, furniture designer and object designer.

**FOR MORE**  
[WWW.LMD-STUDIO.COM](http://WWW.LMD-STUDIO.COM)  
[WWW.LUKASMACHNIK.COM](http://WWW.LUKASMACHNIK.COM)

**JANIS JOPLIN**

Don’t compromise yourself. You are all you’ve got. There is no yesterday, no tomorrow, it’s all the same day.



**PABLO PICASSO**

It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.

**SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES**

When you encounter difficulties and contradictions, do not try to break them, but bend them with gentleness and time.



**KAREN HORNEY**

No one can entirely step out of his time, that despite his keenness of vision his thinking is in many ways bound to be influenced by the mentality of his time.



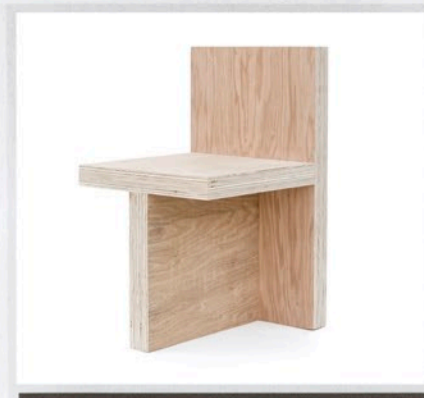
**RICK OWENS | BRONZE VESSELS**

Transforming raw materials into 'moments of gleaming opulence', Michèle Lamy and Rick Owens's collaboration on this array of vessels allows glimpses into the life they have created together. "Anyone creating their own environment is following a utopian vision. Mine is brutalist fur on a brutalist rock next to a brutalist fire in a brutalist cave. Making furniture is my version of couture—its time consuming artisans work made with, and for, a life with my better half the Hun," reflects Rick Owens.



**P4H (PARTS OF FOUR HOME) | HANGING PENDANT**

P4H (Parts of Four Home) is a home collection in collaboration with Parts of Four. Founded by designer, sculptor, installation artist and long-time Rick Owens collaborator, Evan Sugerman. Parts of Four is a handmade jewellery line specializing in the carving, fusing and treatment of minerals, silver, bone, and other organic materials. Machnik's vision was to take Evan's beautiful brutalist jewellery and scale it to fit a domestic context. Machnik and Evan's first collection features massive Brazilian quartz crystals that are embedded into sculptural steel and bronze fixtures, and internally illuminated with hidden LEDs.



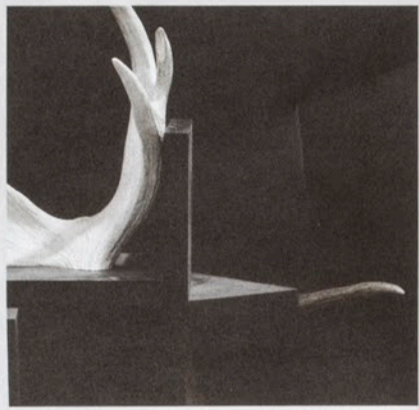
**LUKAS MACHNIK | MONUMENT CHAIR**

A few months prior to shooting NBC's American Dream Builders, Lukas Machnik launched MONUMENT, a collection of minimal hardwood furniture composed of intersecting planes. Reacting to our contemporary condition, Machnik aggrandizes the very act of sitting by reducing his furniture to pure abstraction. The essential elements of form, scale, and perspective take preference, resulting in a series of monolithic structures—one might even call them sculptures.



**RICK OWENS | CONCRETE LAMP**

This lamp from Rick Owens's Home Collection calls to mind the architecture of Le Corbusier with its brutalist form. It is available as a floor lamp and a wall applique in a variety of materials, including ebonized plywood and bronze.



**RICK OWENS | STAG T STOOL**

Drawing from such art and design movements as formalism and minimalism, this sculptural stool by Rick Owens is an essential accent for every contemporary interior. The Stag T is intrinsically pure in form, beginning with the perpendicular arrangement of two ebonized plywood planes. As a third structural support, Rick Owens elegantly incorporates a raw moose antler. The antler is eccentric, unique, unconstrained, and accordingly disrupts the stool's former simplicity. Each Stag T is piece unique due to the use of natural materials.



**JAN JANSSEN | STOOL**

Working out of Amsterdam, Jan Janssen, of Janssenwerken, makes these sculptural, brutalist cast stools in a variety of materials including iron, aluminum and bronze. Pictured here is the cast aluminum stool.



**RICK OWENS | ALCHEMY CHAIR**

The alchemy chair by Rick Owens is conceptually established on a triangular prism wireframe. Its brutalist bronze legs and arms are elegantly tapered and textured, comfortably dissected by a plane of black leather upholstery. Not only is the alchemy chair functional, it additionally serves as spatial line drawing that transforms any interior. A true piece de résistance.



**LOHNEY WHITE III | EXO SOFA**

The EXO Sofa is clad with ebonized steel, accented by a Warshakian bronze exoskeleton, and cushioned with succulent black leather upholstery. Lohney White approaches his sofa as if three dimensionally mapping his encaustic paintings onto the furniture's armature. Despite its grand span, the EXO Sofa has a modular design, so it is easily disassembled and can be customized to fit a variety of rooms.



**LUKAS MACHNIK | NERO MIRROR**

Machnik's NERO Mirror is inspired by the highly polished metal mirrors of Ancient Rome and by Roman Emperor Nero. NERO's mirrored surface is polished copper emerging from a black patina vignette. A bronze frame complements its sculptural shape and completes the piece. Pictured here is Diane Bernet visiting LMD/studio Chicago.



**P4H (PARTS OF FOUR HOME) | FLOOR I**

FLOOR I is the flagship piece from P4H. It is a massive hand-fabricated iron base with acid patina finish. A hand-lathed iron torch with acid patina finish and a huge resin-set 21.3 kg citrine smoky quartz crystal. Working back and forth between Chicago and Bali, Machnik and Sugerman have continued to collaborate on the Parts of Four Home project with the unveiling of their latest pieces in December.

**BANKSY**

The holy goal is to spend less time making the picture than it takes people to look at it.



**TOM FORD**

From the time we're born until we die, we're kept busy with artificial stuff that isn't important.

**THOMAS FREY**

Seeing into the future is like walking through a dark forest with a flashlight that illuminates but a short distance ahead. Each step forward gives us a new perspective, adding light to what was previously dark. The people of tomorrow will simply need a better flashlight.

**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

A good artist has less time than ideas.

**ROBERT COLES**

We all need empty hours in our lives or we will have no time to create or dream.

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