

THE COLLECTOR

Emma O'Kelly's expert design finds include furniture as art by Ado Chale, handmade Moroccan rugs and an amazonite table

TURNING THE TABLES

Crafted from rare and unusual materials, the furniture designs of Ado Chale are treasurable works of art

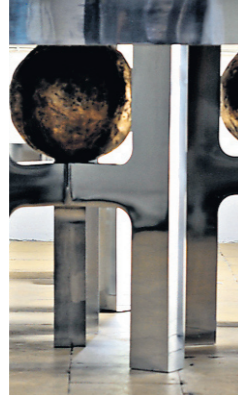
The hot-pink façade of Ado Chale's studio brings a nondescript Brussels side street to life. Inside, the 86-year-old designer is slicing up pieces of bone and arranging them meticulously into what will be a tabletop set in resin. Like many of his works, it has not been made to order and its future, and the way it will turn out, is unknown.

Those with a passion for mineralogy may be familiar with Chale's works – lamps with steel stands punctuated by huge slices of agate; tables made with mosaic and marquetry of marcasite and tiger's eye; cabinets decorated with mother-of-pearl.

From a young age, Chale would scour disused railway tracks and mine the coastal cliffs of the Pas-de-Calais and the quarries of Fontainebleau in search of rocks, minerals and fossils. By the mid-Sixties, he had amassed so many that he opened a retail gallery and started to incorporate them into furniture.

Commissions for his work duly followed. Chale made a black lacquered table inlaid with mother-of-pearl buttons for the Dior showroom in Brussels, and in 1968 the Hilton bought 25 of his mosaic tables. Now, after more than a 40-year hiatus, he's again creating furniture for Christian Dior shops in New York and China – Dior architect Peter Marino, an admirer of Chale's work, commissioned the work.

Chale has had something of a renaissance since 2005. Gallery Yves Gastou in Paris has been working with him for the past decade to bring into production old designs from the Seventies, as well as new works. Among them are



Signature style: Ado Chale, above, at his studio; Chale's Drop of Water table in aluminium, right

his bronze table, Le Soleil Maya, and the four-petal Josephine coffee table that has just been produced in bronze and aluminium as a limited edition.

Across from his studio is Chale's *maison particulier*, where he lives surrounded by his treasures. Half-finished tabletops are stacked against walls, alongside works in need of repair. Piles of mosaic squares, rocks, stone torsos, gemstones and ivory tusks gather in corners.

One of the reasons Chale's works are now so valued (tables sell for around £20,000 at auction) is because the materials he works with – malachite, tiger's eye, carnelian, rhodochrosite, jasper – are much harder to come by. Back in the Sixties, Chale visited Arizona and returned home with petrified trunks of sequoia trees that he turned into tables, something that he would never get away with today.

At next year's week-long Brussels Fine Art and Antique Fair (January 24 to February 1), Galerie Pierre Mahaux will be selling three of Chale's works, among them a coffee table inlaid with horn disks from the Seventies, valued at more than £60,000.

In contrast to his opulent designs, his living conditions are decidedly spartan. A few items of clothing hang on exposed hooks, the tiny galley kitchen looked unused, it's bitterly cold and a prisoner-standard bed rests on four wooden blocks.

His works may be selling for thousands, but for Chale, it's still about the process rather than the price tag.

adochale.com; galeriepierremahaux.com



START A COLLECTION WALL RUGS

Spaces in which glass, stone floors and exposed brickwork feature heavily may be light and modern, but they also present acoustic challenges. One solution is to hang textiles on the walls to soften the sound. Katrien Vermeeren runs Emily's House (rugs pictured, below and bottom), which specialises in handmade Moroccan Beni Ouarain and Boucherouite rugs and vintage Caput kilims from Turkey. "Kilims are good hung on the wall, even with a mirror or painting on top. They create a warm atmosphere and buffer against noise," says Vermeeren. "The Turkish Perde kilim works well with high ceilings as it is long and light. It was traditionally used as a curtain, a room divider and as an actual tent. Moroccan Boucherouite rugs are also good on the wall; they're made from recycled materials, not hugely large, colourful and very expressive." Antwerp-based carpet dealer



N. Vrouyr (rug pictured top), which has been in existence for nearly a century, has seen a rise in demand for smaller textiles such as jewel bags, salt bags and saddle blankets. "About 30 per cent of what we sell is destined for the wall," says Christian Vrouyr, grandson of the original owner. "It's an excellent solution when you have a problem with resonance." Art lovers too, are turning to textiles as an appealing soft option. Tapestries from the likes of Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke and Rosemarie Trockel are now seen as big-ticket collectibles; one of Trockel's untitled wool tapestries, from 1985, fetched US\$5m (£3m) at auction in April. British-based artist Caroline Achaintre creates wall-mounted woollen works that resemble futuristic tribal masks. At this year's Frieze London art fair one of her works, *Befor*, sold for £11,000 at Arcade Fine Arts gallery in Clerkenwell, London.

emilyshouselondon.com; vrouyr.com



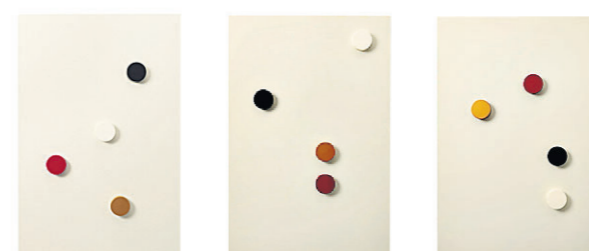
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SOMETHING I LOVE COSMAGNETIC KINETIC ART MULTIPLES

The Aram Gallery has wheeled out some cracking exhibitions and products this year as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations.

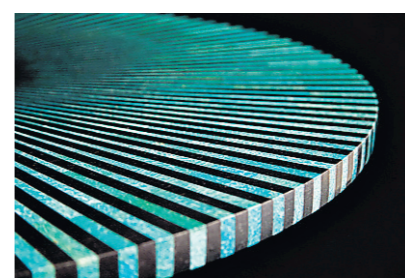
One of the highlights is the Cosmagnetic Kinetic Art

Multiples (pictured above), by the late Chinese conceptual artist Li Yuan-chia, featuring four coloured magnetic dots on a white metal panel.

Each coloured dot signifies something different: black

represents origin and end, red is life and blood, gold is nobility and white is purity.

Cosmagnetic Kinetic Art Multiples, £395; 020 7557 7557; aram.co.uk



OBJECT OF DESIRE BETHAN GRAY AMAZONITE TABLE

If precious stones are your passion, scout out The Ruby Tree Stripe Collection of bowls, platters, candlesticks, coasters and incense burners by designer Bethan Gray. Best of all is the Stripe

Table (above), made from 1,001 hand-cut pieces of semi-precious amazonite, inlaid into a black marble top by master craftsmen. Gray collaborated with historian and scholar Mitchell

Abdul Karim Crites for the collection – inspired by 11th- and 12th-century Islamic art.

Stripe Table, £36,000, exclusively at Harrods; 020 7730 1234; harrods.com

LITTLE BLACK BOOK

JEREMY MAXWELL WINTREBERT

Up close, Wintrebert's hand-blown Clouds lights look as if they are lined with netting or silk threads. Instead, they are delicate lines of colour, painstakingly traced into opaque glass balls; the criss-cross weave a familiar motif of Wintrebert's works. Price on application; 020 7490 2366; galleryfumi.com

LIVVY FINK

If anyone can capture the underwater world in a glass object, it's Fink. Working with molten glass to create the initial shapes, she makes each piece in layers, meticulously securing the tiny bubbles over each surface. The shapes are cast and then fired in a mould. From £800; livvyfink.co.uk

