

PIN-UP

POWER

MAGAZINE FOR
ARCHITECTURAL
ENTERTAINMENT
ISSUE 21

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BRUTALISM!

FEATURING

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EXPLORATION,
AND YOUNG
PROJECTS

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Christopher Stuart's brass sculpture-cum-furniture Chamfer Table 1 was displayed as part of his first solo show at the New York gallery *The Future Perfect*.



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brass, polished bronze, blackened steel, and mirror-polished stainless steel. Inspired by Soviet Constructivism, he set out to “disarrange” classic furniture types, but as the software (Rhino) made the simple geometric forms roll and change direction, Stuart sometimes pulled his hand from the design process to let the glitches create their own system. In a nod to Sol LeWitt, who he counts among his references, Stuart edited and created variables and restraints, and then pushed them to show what the options looked like within this newly created system. Rather than furniture, Stuart defines the resulting objects as “sculpture at furniture scale.” “Our social norm and acceptance of what sculpture is has been reduced to standardized sizes: public-art size or pedestal size,” he explains. “Hence it’s the particular scale of each object that gives it its function.” Visitors to the exhibition might also have interpreted

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the five abstract pieces, presented like jewels in a casket, as a very elaborate bench, two coffee tables, a console, and a desk (with price tags ranging from 18,000 to 53,000 dollars). The opulence of the *Constructs and Glitches* exhibition stands in contrast to Stuart’s own humble background. A former welder, he first leapt to prominence while completing a BFA at the Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis, thanks to the publication of *DIY Furniture: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Laurence King, 2011). Providing instructions for copying works by high-profile furniture designers with low budget hardware-store materials like PVC or plywood, the book was followed by a second volume in 2014. That same year Stuart returned to working with metal, and since then the 41-year-old, who sees his work somewhere in the tradition of Scott Burton or Donald Judd, has dedicated himself to further blurring the boundaries between art and design, and challenging the traditional concept of what furniture should be. Not an obvious conceit when your practice is based in the small town of Carmel, Indiana. “Most people around here aren’t aware of my work,” Stuart admits. “But I like being here. It keeps my overhead low, and I get to test my ideas out in New York City.”

— NATALIA TORIJA