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PHOTOGRAPHY CATE WNEK

Setting the Table

Interior design, Maine art, and furniture craftsmanship on the midcoast

Organized by the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, *Setting the Table* is the collaborative effort of Maine furniture makers, designers, and artists. Being held at the Messler Gallery in Rockport, this exhibit features six of Maine's leading interior designers paired with six furniture makers and six galleries to create unique, beautiful "dining tableaux" featuring the work of Maine artists. Participating design firms are Banks Design Associates, Chatfield Design, Hurlbutt Designs, Maine Street Design Co., Margo Moore Interiors, and Maclin Design. MH+D

1. Debbie Chatfield **2.** Rebecca Falzano and Megan van der Kieft **3.** Katy Foley and Brett Johnson **4.** Aled Lewis, Gigi Aea, and Victoria Allport **5.** James Light and Elizabeth Moss **6.** Victoria Allport and Heidi Kirn **7.** Kevin Rodel and Jason Mowery **8.** Jula Sampson and Paul Sampson **9.** Christine Maclin and Tim Rousseau

For more information, see Resources on page 118.

Setting the Table

BY REBECCA FALZANO | PHOTOGRAPHY CATE WNEK

What happens when you take six interior designers, six furniture makers, and six art galleries, match them up, and let their creative talents mix and mingle? The Center for Furniture Craftsmanship decided to find out.

On a Friday in September, the Messler Gallery at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship opened its doors to a first-of-its-kind exhibition. Setting the Table showcases the collaborative efforts of six furniture makers, six designers, and six art galleries—along with a handful of Maine craftspeople and artisans. Each of the six groups were given a challenge: come up with a beautiful tableaux, complete with table and chairs, artwork, and accessories. Their responses to this assignment ranged from the contemporary to the traditional, with both literal and figurative interpretations. On the following pages is a look at the exhibition and a glimpse into what the designers and furniture makers were thinking as they set their tables.

DESIGNER: **James Light, Simply Home & Banks Design Associates**
FURNITURE MAKER: **Eric Ritter**
ARTIST//GALLERY: **Rufus Coes//Elizabeth Moss Galleries**

James Light's first thought for the exhibition, of course, was to set the table for a meal. "Then I contemplated the fact that my assigned table and chairs consisted of a bar high-top and stools," he says, "so I thought about appetizers and wine." Then it occurred to Light that he didn't have to create an invitation to sit at the table at all, but could let the viewer be witness to a narrative. So he decided to get adventurous. "I liked the playfulness of the strip-poker scene and the slight tension that it produces," he says. Furniture maker Eric Ritter's table and chairs from his Morphology Series are just as suitable for a dinner party for two as they are for a cocktail party. "This set is meant for 'somewhere in between,'" says Ritter.

SOURCES

Hanging light, rug & glassware - Simply Home

DESIGNER: **Megan van der Kieft, Margo Moore Interiors**
FURNITURE MAKER: **William Doub**
ARTIST//GALLERY: **Joseph Keiffer//The Gallery at Frenchman's Bay**

Having done her thesis on Antonio Gaudi in college, Megan van der Kieft of Margo Moore Interiors was thrilled to be paired with furniture craftsman William Doub. "Bill refreshed my art history," she says, "and revived my senses to the organic nature of design." The pair worked alongside Tyra Hanson of the Gallery at Frenchman's Bay to complete the setting. Hanson's selection of Maine seascape artwork complemented Scott Potter's gold table-setting pieces and the pebbled rug chosen to frame the space. Doub took his inspiration for the table and chairs from the art nouveau period. "I believe the drop-leaf table is an elegant solution where space is highly economized. It may rest quietly (with its leaves folded) in a hallway for most of its life, only to spread its wings as a new and beautiful form for a special dinner among friends."

SOURCES

Natural & silk floral displays - Seasons Downeast
24k gold chargers - Handmade in California by Annie Glass, available at Margo Moore Interiors
Vase, compote & dessert plates - Scott Potter
Napkins - Kim Seybert, available at Margo Moore Interiors
Leather on chairs - Edelman Leather, available at Margo Moore Interiors
Custom-designed window treatments - available at Margo Moore Interiors
Fabric - Larsen "Figi," available at Margo Moore Interiors
Trim for window treatments - Samuel & Sons, available at Margo Moore Interiors
Area carpet - Stark from the Nairamat Collection

DESIGNER: **Deborah Chatfield, Chatfield Design**
FURNITURE MAKER: **Libby Schrum**
ARTIST//GALLERY: **Susan Jane Belton//Gleason Fine Art**

Furniture maker Libby Schrum is inspired by the cleanliness and honesty of design of the midcentury modern movement. Her Chelsea dining table and chairs are sophisticated design solutions for smaller spaces. "The balance between function and aesthetics is most intriguing and appeals to my sense of practicality," she says. Designer Deborah Chatfield first met Schrum when she asked her to visit her in her design studio with one of her chairs. The chair design served as the inspiration for the geometric fabric, which in turn led to the table setting. The sushi "dunk plates," square in design with a sunken square for soy sauce, directly mimic the geometric squares in the chair fabric. Susan Jane Belton's artwork from Gleason Fine Art features Maine coffee cups. "I wanted a lot of color to offset the white sushi plates," says Chatfield. "Belton's artwork was perfect for that, but when we hung it, there was still too much white wall, so I added the orange matte board at the suggestion of fellow designer Christine Maclin."

SOURCES

Fabric - Brunschwig & Fils
Tableware: CB2
Sake cups & carafes - Mr. Wats Sushi
Soy sauce containers - Well Tempered Kitchen
Rug - Tim Van Campen
Recycled chandelier - Anthropologie
Succulents - Seasons Downeast

DESIGNER: **Brett Johnson, Maine Street Design Co.**
FURNITURE MAKER: **Kevin Rodel**
ARTIST: **Holly Ready**

Designer Brett Johnson chose to embrace the Asian modern feeling invoked in furniture maker Kevin Rodel's work by setting the table with Japanese-inspired dinnerware by local pottery artist Jason Mowery. "The metal crane pieces are, for me, representative of paper cranes, which are so prevalent in Japan," he says. The common accent throughout is red, punctuated in both the dishes and the fabrics, as well as in Holly Ready's beautiful painted landscape. "The whole feeling is one of a warm welcome in an intimate setting," says Johnson. Rodel's dramatic high-back chairs are a slight variation on the 1904 Ingram Street chair design of Charles Rennie Mackintosh of Glasgow. "Mackintosh has been a deep well of inspiration for my work for over 20 years," says Rodel. "I find his designs to be perpetually modern. My only change was to add a curve to the center back slats, thereby adding a small degree of slant to the back, allowing this chair to conform to contemporary standards of seating comfort." Rodel's table was strongly inspired by the designs of Josef Hoffmann of Vienna as well as Japanese decorative design. "The idea for the open-grid pedestal comes very much from Hoffmann's silver/metal designs, while the 'pinwheel' construction of the top with its open center square is a typical form for Japanese hibachi tables," explains Rodel.

SOURCES

Pottery - Jason Mowery, available through Maine Street Mercantile & Manufacturing
Chair fabric - Villa Romo Kirby, available through Maine Street Design Co.
Landscape rug - Company C
Irish linen napkins - Ulster Linen, available through Maine Street Design Co.

DESIGNER: **Christine Maclin, Maclin Design**
FURNITURE MAKER: **Tim Rousseau**
ARTIST//GALLERY: **Katie Shier, Dave Wade, Matt Welch, Anne Ireland & Peter Dransfield//Flat Iron Gallery**

Christine Maclin began her work on the exhibition by taking a trip to Flat Iron Gallery in Portland and choosing a coherent group of work that represented a variety of mediums: bronze sculpture, paintings, and digital work on aluminum. "I also wanted to include the wonderful bronze statues of the Dancing Nataraja, the Dancing Shiva, from India," she explains. "He is the creator and the destroyer, dancing everything into existence—I thought it would be a great addition in a room where everything was recently created." Maclin's new line of fabrics, EAST, is a translation of antique Indian hand block prints. "I thought they would work well with the Dancing Shiva and the artwork. We also put an EAST design on the chair seats," she says. Tim Rousseau's inspiration for the table and chairs came from English furniture maker Edward Barnsley, son of the famed Sidney Barnsley, who was a pioneer of the Arts and Crafts movement. "The thought around the table was for it to be a beautiful but heavily used piece of furniture, ideally in a family setting," explains Rousseau. "The soap finish builds a nice patina as the years go on, which adds to its beauty."

SOURCES

Fabric - EAST by Christine Maclin

DESIGNER: **Louise Hurlbutt, Hurlbutt Designs**
FURNITURE MAKER: **Gregg Lipton**
ARTIST//GALLERY: **Craig Mooney//Maine Art Paintings & Sculpture**

Louise Hurlbutt's inspiration for the exhibition began after seeing images of a table and chairs by furniture designer Gregg Lipton. The table is modern and earthy, and the chairs are made of longleaf heart pine. "I wanted to continue this theme with a choice of tableware from Villeroy and Boch, a European company with many contemporary designs. I found the NewWave dishes with delightful bird and nature designs and paired them with a complementary Dash and Albert cotton rug in green-toned geometric," says Hurlbutt. In collaboration with Maine Art Paintings and Sculpture, Hurlbutt picked out a painting by Craig Mooney that subtly gathers each piece into a whole. The oil on stretched canvas in bold tones complements the tableware. Melissa from Fleurant in Kennebunk created a sustainable centerpiece for the center inlay of Lipton's table. The beautiful spiral bamboo arrangement set in glass marbles tops off the vibrant new-fashioned table setting.

SOURCES

Cotton hooked rug - Dash & Albert Rug Company
Mugs, bowls & salad plates - Villeroy & Boch
Custom-made centerpiece - Fleurant

For more information, see Resources on page 118.

SETTING THE TABLE **RUNS UNTIL JANUARY 8 AT THE CENTER FOR FURNITURE CRAFTSMANSHIP'S MESSLER GALLERY. VISIT WOODSCHOOL.ORG FOR MORE.**