

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Christopher Chiappa's "Furniture" Playfully Blends Art And Design

Hannah Martin

April 2018

p. 46

DISCOVERIES

1. COMPOSITION #47 (FRIED EGG #2), 2017, BY CHRISTOPHER CHIAPPA. 2. CHIAPPA WITH NEW WORKS AT HIS STUDIO IN LONG ISLAND CITY, QUEENS. 3. COMPOSITION #45, 2017, CAN SERVE AS A SCULPTURAL ROOM DIVIDER.

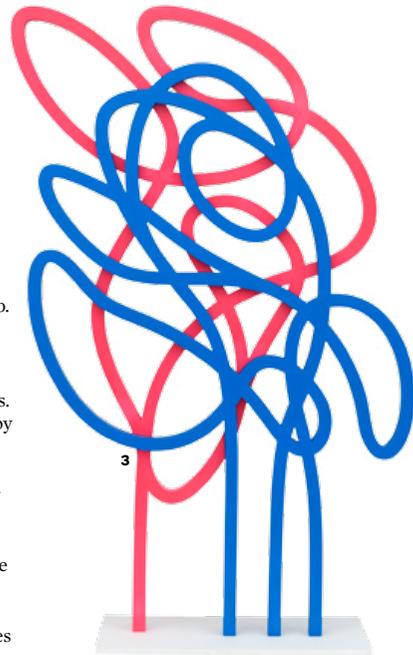


ART SCENE

Shape Shifter

New York–based artist *Christopher Chiappa* takes familiar furniture forms to a zany new frontier

Christopher Chiappa is sick of people asking why he's making tables. "This is not just a table," he says at his Long Island City, Queens, studio. "It's a painting. And a sculpture." Sixteen years ago, after a prolonged creative dry spell, the conceptual artist began crafting furniture—a project he considered unrelated to his art practice. "I needed a coffee table, so I started making ones out of Styrofoam and resin," he explains. "Next I needed a stool." Those multiplied, each seat painted in hues that he selected by throwing darts at a Benjamin Moore color wheel. "I would not have had the audacity to paint or sculpt freehand," explains Chiappa, "but I never felt intimidated by furniture." Chiappa has since gone on to fill his studio with benches, tables, and other seemingly functional (though sometimes that's an illusion) forms with unexpected geometries, many of which will be the subject of a solo show at Kate Werble Gallery, on view from April 14 to June 2. What look like nesting tables, stacked into a bull's-eye motif, are missing their tops. Another set spells out E-G-O. "Who actually uses their nesting tables anyway?" he says with a laugh. "You always see them stacked in a corner." Other works reluctantly perform their duties with surrealistic flair: Benches take the form of a burning cigarette or a pink Band-Aid; occasional tables read as floating fried eggs. "The crazier a piece gets, the more it has to return to some functional idea," Chiappa reflects on blurring the distinctions between art and design. "I'm always asking, 'What if it never came back?'" christopherchiappa.com —HANNAH MARTIN



1. AND 3. ELISABETH BERNSTEIN/COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND KATE WERBLE GALLERY, NEW YORK, NY