

Mirror

Mirror

Large Print

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CHATSWORTH

Joris Laarman

b. 1979, The Netherlands

What if anyone could make spectacular furniture, all by themselves? This democratic idea inspired the *Maker* series of Dutch designer Joris Laarman. To make them by hand would be very difficult. But, because the individual components are so small, they can be fabricated using digital tools. Laarman released the blueprints for one of his simpler *Maker* chairs online, so that anyone could create their own versions: 'we invite everyone to help make them smarter and more diverse.'

The two benches here, while made of many individual parts, are more customized, taking full advantage of the capabilities of Laarman's studio. Their patterns reflect the historic chequered floor, and are also mirror images of each other. One of the many advantages of digital design is that a complicated shape can be flipped around with the press of a button.

Please do not sit

Chris Schanck

b. 1975, USA

Detroit-based designer Chris Schanck makes furniture from scraps of wood, metal, and foam, which he wraps in metallic foil and a clear coat of resin. These materials are non-precious (Schanck developed the technique early in his career, when he had limited resources) but he combines them to majestic effect. They are like something out of a comic book: Schanck's *Cryo Cabinet* would look right at home in Superman's frozen retreat, the Fortress of Solitude.

In the Grotto, the pieces connect with the historic features of the space. The watery surfaces refer to the

nearby indoor fountain – evidence of the 1st Duke of Devonshire's introduction of running water to the house. The crystalline forms resemble those of Chatsworth's geological collections, a connection we have emphasized by placing mineral specimens inside Schanck's cabinet.

Faye Toogood

b. 1977, UK

‘I felt like I was revealing something that had always been there – something almost prehistoric that had been lost to time, and it was my job to find it again.’

This is how British designer Faye Toogood describes her latest collection, Assemblage 7. The objects appear to be carefully excavated, as if by an archaeologist.

The pieces here in the Chapel are made of Purbeck Marble – actually a limestone from Dorset, with dense deposits of snail shell. Prized in the middle ages, it was often used in English cathedrals. Toogood’s elemental forms look still further back, to Neolithic standing

stones. They seem timeless, as if they occupied multiple centuries at once. In acknowledgement of the spiritual setting, Toogood has also provided a bronze pew and two chairs, giving visitors the chance to sit and contemplate.

Faye Toogood

b. 1977, UK

This room, lined in German oak panelling bought by the 6th Duke of Devonshire, was a space for private prayer and the occasional supper, 'like a jolly friar's repast.' Faye Toogood's installation imaginatively responds to this past use. It centres on a carved wooden table with a top like a miniature landscape: elevated plateaus at each end, and a broad valley between.

Accompanying this monumental table are two stools carved from bog oak (a special type of wood found in peat bogs, which has become extremely dark and

dense over many years of submersion). The furniture makes for an intriguing contrast with the standing stones that Toogood has placed in the adjoining Chapel: a conversation between the everyday and the sacred.

Andile Dyalvane

b. 1978, South Africa

Growing up in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, ceramic artist Andile Dyalvane ‘heard the whisper of the ancestors in the clay.’ Today, this inheritance is reflected throughout his practice. His complex, large-scale ceramic artworks often feature symbolic pictograms and patterns, honouring the traditional practices of the Xhosa people.

For Mirror Mirror, Dyalvane has returned to the ideas he developed here in England, during his residency at Leach Pottery, in St. Ives. The Cornish coastline fired

his imagination, and his vessels took on the shapes of crags overlooking the sea.

Dyalvane's installation sits alongside a sounding line, by the English potter and writer Edmund de Waal, installed here in 2007. Both artists draw deeply on the history of ceramics – all the better to reinvent it.

Ettore Sottsass

1917-2007, Italy

The Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass was, as the saying goes, a true Renaissance man. He designed work in many mediums over the course of his long career. One was hand-blown glass, a medium that charmed him with its brilliance and colour. He wrote that, unlike a paper cup, a crystal goblet 'has no taste and is fragile, so you know from the beginning that your relationship with this object will have a ritualistic aspect.'

Though he had great respect for traditional glass-blowing, Sottsass departed from its usual methods in

surprising ways. He used adhesives and wire to put his pieces together, and introduced striking angles. The resulting objects are abstract totems – spiritual, rather than functional, vessels.

Formafantasma

Founded 2009, Italy

Formafantasma – a design studio led by Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin – respond to the challenge of climate change by researching old technologies, which may have something to teach us.

Here you see one of their earliest projects, focusing on the all-but-forgotten craft of charcoal burning.

Given concerns about carbon in the atmosphere, charcoal might not seem like a very sustainable material. Yet it is an excellent means of water filtration.

It was this property that inspired Formafantasma to make a series of objects with Swiss charcoal burner

Doris Wicki. Their collaborative works are presented here alongside historic views of Chatsworth, where charcoal was once an important fuel source.

Will our world continue to be darkened by pollution?

Or will we find a cleaner, healthier way forward?

Formafantasma's artefacts ask these questions, encouraging us to build a sustainable future.

Max Lamb

b. 1980, UK

The contemporary chairs you see here by British designer Max Lamb are each made from a single piece of cedar, measuring six by eight inches in cross-section. He cut the beams on a band saw and put them together again, like a puzzle. Not a bit of the wood was wasted.

Lamb's pieces are ingenious experiments with the building blocks of design. At the same time, they respond playfully to the woodcarvings here in the State Drawing Room: lime wood trophies by Samuel Watson, and two coronation thrones by Catherine Naish, one of

few female master carvers known from the 1700s.

Lamb offers 'a polite nod of respect' to these precursors. Instead of skilful ornamentation, though, he emphasises the potential contained in every piece of wood.

Jay Sae Jung Oh

b. 1982, South Korea and USA

Jay Sae Jung Oh makes her work mostly from found, discarded materials. She builds these objects into elaborate assemblages, which she wraps tightly with cord. They suggest how we might better relate to the things around us – with imagination and care.

For Mirror Mirror, Oh created a work for the State Music Room. The decorations here include Jan Van Der Vaardt's trompe l'oeil (a trick of the eye) of a violin, painted directly on to the rear door of the room exactly three hundred years ago, in 1723. In response, Oh has made a throne containing a trove of musical

instruments, including a French horn, a snare drum, and an electric guitar. Like Van Der Vaardt's illusory violin, these instruments are mere impressions, forever silent. What instruments can you see in the work?

Fernando Laposse

b. 1988, Mexico

With their endearing shapes and long, shaggy pelts, Fernando Laposse's designs are like something out of a fairy tale: furniture that one can imagine befriending.

Despite their large size, they have an air of vulnerability, as if they were members of a rare endangered species.

The pieces only take on their full meaning when you know how they are made. Laposse creates them in a Mexican village called Tonahuixtla, which has been devastated by climate change. The primary material is sisal, the fibre of the agave plant – a type of succulent

used in the production of tequila. Laposse has pioneered the innovative use of this material in the region, where he is also organising an extensive planting of agave, with the goal of restoring the community's economy.

Ndidi Ekubia

b. 1973, UK

Melt silver, and it pours like milk. Hammer it, and it still moves – but much more slowly. The work of the British silversmith Ndidi Ekubia is inspired by this idea of flow.

Her abstract vessels feature an all-over texture of hammered marks. The effect is like rippling waves, as if the metal were caught in liquid form.

For Mirror Mirror, Ekubia has created a custom suite of objects, with the graduated sizes of a garniture – a set of ceramics you sometimes see on historic mantelpieces. Their reflective surfaces play off those of two large pier glasses (mirrors supplied to Chatsworth

by John Gumley in 1703), and an impressive silver chandelier in the style of Daniel Marot. In this stately company, Ekubia's gleaming vessels introduce a note of pure, surging vitality.

Mirror Mirror: reflecting on drawings for designs

Chatsworth is home to a large collection of old master drawings. This year, we are sharing a selection to complement Mirror Mirror: Reflections on Design at Chatsworth. Sometimes artists draw for pleasure.

Sometimes, it is a critical part of the creative process – developing ideas, solving problems, or preparing for larger painted works. What you see here are drawings that show the thinking required to imagine an object as a different material entirely.

Take a close look at Giulio Romano's drawings. The natural world is translated into functional design. A

tortoise becomes a lidded box; a nest of vine leaves is transformed into a fruit bowl.

Labels in the Old Master Drawings Cabinet

Design for a fresco enframement in S. Susanna, Rome,
1598

Baldassare Croce (1558–1628)

Ink and watercolour on paper

Design for an entablature above a door

William Kent (1685–1748)

Pen and grey ink with grey wash on paper

Design for a silver kettle stand

William Kent (1685–1748)

Pencil, pen and brown ink on paper

Design for a lidded box in the shape of a tortoise

Giulio Romano (1499–1546)

Pen and brown ink with brown wash on paper

Two designs for a chandelier in the Chinoiserie style

William Kent (1685–1748)

Pen and grey ink, grey wash on paper

Design for a sweetmeat box, about 1530

Giulio Romano (1499–1546)

Pen and brown ink with brown wash on paper

Joseph Walsh

b. 1979, Ireland

Furniture maker and sculptor Joseph Walsh has a unique stature in Mirror Mirror, having already completed several major works for Chatsworth before the exhibition was conceived. His studio, on his family's farm in County Cork, is near to Lismore Castle, the Irish home of the Devonshire family.

We have relocated the most spectacular of Walsh's creations for Chatsworth, his Enignum VIII Bed – a composition in bentwood originally conceived for the View Room, in the upper reaches of the house – here to the Sabine Room, named for its painted decoration

by Sir James Thornhill, from 1707. Against the dramatic painted backdrop, Walsh's bed is poetry in motion. Its beautiful curves rise fully six metres above a sleeper's head.

Joseph Walsh

b. 1979, Ireland

Irish furniture maker and sculptor Joseph Walsh is a master of laminated forms. Each sinuous shape is built up from many thin layers of wood, which are then carved by hand. The process is ancient – it was once used to make bows – but Walsh uses it to create contemporary shapes. They seem like wisps of smoke, or drawings made in mid-air.

These brackets were custom-made for this spot, to display ceramics from the collection. It is one of several commissions Walsh has completed for the house over the past few years.

Mahogany oval writing table, 1780–5

David Roentgen (1743–1807)

Germany

David Roentgen and his father, Abraham, were innovative in every aspect of their business. They employed skilled artisans, used modern manufacturing methods and travelled throughout Europe to advertise their work.

At the time that the 5th Duke of Devonshire bought these two tables, they would have been at the height of fashion. The 5th Duke and his wife, Duchess Georgiana, would have seen Roentgen pieces like these

at the French court of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette
and it's likely that they bought these pieces as a result.

Perhaps the most inventive and surprising aspect of
these pieces are the mechanical devices they hide.

Take a look at the video that brings these piece to life.

Mahogany dressing table, 1780–5

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Michael Anastassiades

b. 1967, UK

Michael Anastassiades grew up on the ancient island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean. It was there that he first fell in love with light – ever present in that part of the world – and with ancient cultures. His work is classical, poised and precise.

Anastassiades' installation for the Library exemplifies these qualities. It is an indoor grove of bamboo, the stems carefully hand-finished according to a traditional Japanese method.

The bases are made of poured pewter, pooled around the bamboo to form fitted stands. Illuminated bulbs

are attached with waxed linen thread, in what

Anastassiades calls 'a simple gesture of attachment'.

This precise technique is perfect for these delicate, yet strong, designs.

Ini Archibong

b. 1983, USA and Switzerland

Ini Archibong grew up in California and is now based in Switzerland. In 2016, he began collaborating with skilled glassblowers there to make monumental chandeliers. You can see one here: [Dark Vernus](#) (meaning Dark Spring), a suspended gathering of vessel-like forms with a powerful spiritual presence.

This vestibule also displays two nineteenth-century bronze busts of an African man and woman, by the French artist Charles-Henri Cordier. The depictions are arrestingly beautiful, but also exoticised.

Archibong chose not to address these problematic representations directly, instead his work literally rises above them. The vaulted space is periodically filled with his music. Like his *Dark Vernus*, the composition is epic, abstract, and inspiring.

Samuel Ross

b. 1991, UK

Samuel Ross refers to himself as an 'atypical protagonist' in contemporary art and design. He grew up in modernist housing estates in Brixton and the East Midlands, and remains fascinated by the utopian promise of these buildings – but also their blind spots, which he tries to illuminate.

The works Ross has placed here in the Sculpture Gallery are related to this biographical experience.

They are made partly of marble, like the classical sculptures around them, and partly of steel, powder-coated in bright orange. In modernism, there was a

preference for the industrial over the antique, and the abstract over the figurative. Here at Chatsworth, the priorities are the other way around. Ross embraces it all, creating a hybrid style that is vividly new.

Please do not sit