



Phoebe BRIDGERS

Wang BING

Kerwin FROST

Millie BOBBY BROWN

Deana LAWSON

Ziwe FUMUDOH

Let There

Sculptor Elisa Uberti in her studio at Ateliers Jouret, an industrial outpost home to more than 40 artists and craftspeople in Roubaix, France.



Elisa Uberti

BY REBECCA AARON

Elisa Uberti is a French designer whose forte is mixing lights with ceramics. Her signature lamps are sculptures first and functional lighting pieces second. Uberti's practice focuses on the entire form of a piece, whether that be one of her ceramic lamps or one of the never-before-seen chairs she plans on firing soon. A cardinal inspiration for Uberti is 20th-century sculptor André Borderie and his designs of the fifties and sixties. She shapes her vision while keeping the organic architecture of the seventies in mind as well. These influences are on full display with her household lighting fixtures that are meant to feel like small illuminating dwellings in their own right. These "small protective houses" are made of white, red and black chamotte, cooked at different temperatures depending on Uberti's desired color. They not only intimately brighten rooms, but highlight the distinctly organic and soft nature of ceramic.

Uberti began sculpting when she was expecting her second child. Being on the brink of motherhood unmistakably informed the rounder and more "heartwarming" shapes reflected in her pieces. This was just the initial flame that ignited Uberti's passion for rounded edges in organic architecture, exploring the idea of comfort in a round universe, similar to the "womb of the mother." Currently, her lamps are exhibited at the Galerie Philia in Walker Tower in New York City and she has an exclusive lamp in preparation for Collectible in Brussels in May. She is also gearing up for a solo show at the end of the year in Antwerp in the am designs gallery. While Uberti has become renowned for her organic, contemporary lighting fixtures, designs with new shapes and new household furnishings are ready to bake.

COURTESY OF ELISA UBERTI.

Be Lights

This creative class of six emerging lighting designers is making some of the most exciting work today.

Bennet Schlesinger in his LA studio with lamps from his new series.



COURTESY OF BENNET SCHLESINGER.

Bennet Schlesinger

BY ELIZABETH FAZZARE

"What I love about ceramics is that the most loud experience of working with clay is having your hands in the mud," explains Los Angeles-based artist Bennet Schlesinger of his practice, which toes the line between sculpture and industrial design. "It's earth, air and light and not pushing too hard on what's naturally taking place." After he got his start three years ago in artworks made of mixed media, metal and stone, the natural simplicity of ceramics and the ability to make a beautiful object that functions turned the art maker into a lighting designer. Now, using just bamboo, paper and ceramic, Schlesinger has released a new series of table lamps whose forms marry the old and new of his artistic experiments.

Emitting an expressively framed soft glow and grounded by an organic base, these light sculptures don't distinguish between the two object categories. For Schlesinger, the mix is his sweet spot. "I have a lot of years of experience making artwork so that's my voice and my love and it shows through in the production of these works," he explains. "They're very sculptural but the fact that they have an inherent use is the main drive for me to make them." Using a slab-building technique and a glazing method that emulates patina, the ceramic elements can take the artist three to four months to complete. The layered paper shades are often framed one way and end up another: embracing "mistakes or failures" is something the artist enjoys; it's all process, he says, and leads to new discoveries.

At the moment, he is focused on expanding his repertoire to pendants, chandeliers and floor lamps. As always, function is on his mind when experimenting, something that reinforces his joy in the craft of making. After all, he says, using clay is "a real childlike experience. It's just play."

culturedmag.com 81