

# ELLE DECOR

## IN NEW YORK, AN ART DECO LANDMARK HOSTS AN ADVENTUROUS SHOW OF ART AND FURNITURE

*The results (and the views!) are jaw-dropping.*



By SEAN SANTIAGO FEB 19, 2021



In the wake of a year that forced us to [become acquainted with our interiors](#) more intimately than ever before, an exhibition that sees domestic space as a rarefied tableau could be a risky, if not alienating, proposition. Yet [Galerie Philia](#)'s new show of collectible design, co-curated with the Italian architect and designer [Pietro Franceschini](#) and bringing together more than 70 works by 40 international designers, makes a strong case that our homes can indeed be a creative canvas.



One room at the Galerie Philia exhibition features Evan Fay's Fauteuil, made of foam encased in a scuba-knit fabric woven through a steel pipe frame; a Miami floor lamp by Georgian design studio Rooms; a low stone table by Frédéric Saulou; and vessels by Niclas Wolf.

Courtesy Galerie Philia

Spread across two expansive floors in a residence at the historic Art Deco [Walker Tower](#) in New York's Chelsea neighborhood, the exhibition—on view through May 15—features works from established talents like Rick Owens and Nina Edwards alongside pieces from more experimental and emerging talents like Rooms and Studio Noon. These designs—culled from the gallery's locations in New York, Singapore, and Geneva—are presented in traditional living and dining room configurations, bedrooms and offices, as well as in interstitial spaces like shower stalls and hallways.

Galerie Philia's minimalist inclinations are teased out by Franceschini into a richly detailed mise-en-scene that elegantly sweats the small stuff: finishes, joinery, fastenings, and even orientation, with new works rotated in and out throughout the duration of the show.



Laurids Gallée's green resin console table.

Courtesy Galerie Philia

Some of the furnishings were custom made for the exhibition, like French designer Cedric Breisacher's black oak dining table, hewn in two so that it could fit into a New York-sized elevator. The shape-shifting nature of time and light is an ever-present theme in the rooms at Walker Tower—a resin console by Austria's Laurids Gallée, for example, deepens from lime to emerald depending on how the light hits it at different times of day.

“Our goal is to show that *minimal* doesn't necessarily mean *reductive*,” says Franceschini, whose interior and furniture design practice, PF | Studio, was launched in 2020. His own brass arch console and lambswool-and-ash Bling Bling chairs are featured in the exhibition.



A white stoneware lamp by Elisa Uberti sits atop a wood console table by the designer Lucas Morten.

Courtesy Galerie Philia.



One of a series of sculpted vessels by the Dutch designer Willem Van Hooff.

Courtesy Galerie Philia.

But it was Galerie Philia's previous group show, staged in [Barjac Castle](#) in the French countryside last fall, that served as the catalyst for Franceschini's interest in curating. There again, context played an important role in both the legibility of the various works on display as well as the audience's approach to them, understanding them simultaneously as art and functional objects and, often, as something in between.

The Walker Tower exhibition similarly leverages its unique setting to create a tension that entralls the viewer: We understand that the work seems best viewed at a remove while at the same time feeling the need to touch it all.



In the upstairs corridor, Studio Noon's pigmented cement chair cozies up to the Brooklyn-based Brazilian artist Theo Pinto's work *Beautiful Pollution*.

Courtesy Galerie Philia

Franceschini, for his part, admits a personal preference for the upstairs corridor, draped in white, bookended as it is by two Willem Van Hooff flattened vessels that thwart our perception of two- and three-dimensional objects. It's an area usually reserved for "connection," as he puts it, where the works on view elaborate on the latent potential of a space otherwise taken for granted. It's a perspective on how we live with what we love—and a creative approach we all could use right about now.