

# risd

## Rhode Island School of Design's Furniture Design Department presents RISDXMABEO 2019 in Milan



*Marked Chair, Amalia Attias; Photo credit: Mark Johnston*

**Providence, RI -April 5, 2019** - The department of Furniture Design at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) is pleased to present RISDXMABEO 2019 at Ventura Projects in Milan.

Debuting as part of the second edition of [Ventura Future](#) during Milan Design Week, the exhibition is the outcome of an external partnership between the Department of Furniture Design at RISD and Mabeo Furniture in Botswana.

### ***Ventura Future***

April 9-14, 2019

Room L located in the Ventura Future Hotel, via Bergognone 34, Milan

Tuesday, April 9 – Saturday, April 13, 9:30am – 8:00pm

Wednesday April 10 (opening evening), 8:00pm – 10:00pm

Sunday, April 14, 9:30am – 6:00pm

Thirteen juniors, seniors and graduate students in the program participated in a research elective taught by Assistant Professor Patty Johnson. Working with Johnson and designer Peter Mabeo to unpack notions of cultural identity within the realm of contemporary art and design, they explored the critical role of human dynamics and designed work shaped by personal interaction and theory. Through the process, students also learned about emerging territories for craft and design practice and how craft can be a catalyst for social and economic development.

In addition, the partnership offered students the opportunity to design unique work that was prototyped in Botswana by Mabeo Furniture.

"The RISD students were presented with a unique opportunity to create work in collaboration with Peter Mabeo," noted Patricia Johnson, assistant professor and graduate program director. "Through Peter's quiet insistence that relationships are at the core of all product design, and that through this comes sensitive and meaningful work, the students gained a deeper understanding of exchange and cross-cultural collaboration. The results speak for themselves."

RISDXMABEO 2019 will feature the following pieces:

***Marked Chair***

design: Amalia Attias | BFA 2020 FD  
materials/ techniques: steel, paint, Letraset

Contemporary African art served as inspiration for a metal chair that is marked by hand with paint and Letraset.

***Deconstructed Basket***

design: Zac Banik | MFA 2019 FD  
materials/ techniques: grass fibers, wood, paint

Drawing on the materials and aesthetic qualities of traditionally woven Tswana baskets, *Deconstructed Basket* captures the essential traits of this craft tradition in a contemporary installation. Each piece is a wooden frame upon which grass fibers are hung and cut. The fibers have been dyed and painted in a manner determined by the artisan who created the piece.

***Purity Mirror***

design: Tiarra Bell | BFA 2020 FD  
materials/ techniques: panga panga wood, polished sheet metal, paint

*Purity Mirror* is informed and inspired by traditional techniques used within the Mabeo factory, such as coopering and hand-carving. The reflection created by the asymmetrical form and polished sheet metal back suggests a portal to an unexpected place.

***New Metal Stools***

design: Yifei Chen | BFA 2020 FD  
materials/ techniques: panga panga wood, galvanized sheet metal, hand-rubbed finish

*New Metal Stools* utilizes folded galvanized sheet metal as its central structural and visual element.

***Get Uncomfortable***

design: Will Chouinard | MFA 2020 FD  
materials/ techniques: panga panga wood, black stain

*Get Uncomfortable* asks the user to experience the designer's initial feelings of humility at his own lack of knowledge about Africa, about Botswana and about Mabeo. The fragmented, "uncomfortable" seating surfaces suggest that others should examine their own stereotypes and biases as well.

***Reach Shelf***

design: Asher Gillman | BFA 2020 FD  
materials/ techniques: ash wood, paint

*Reach Shelf* was inspired by self-sustaining technology used in Dogon mosque construction. The structure of this type of mosque acts as scaffolding for the perpetual task of rebuilding its mud stucco exterior in order to offset natural erosion.

### **Peak Table**

design: Tim Miller | MFA 2019 FD

materials/ techniques: panga panga wood, paint

*Peak Table* was inspired by patterns found throughout African textiles and ceramic work. The form has been simplified to its most basic elements while still maintaining the pattern from which it was derived.

### **Tripod Chair**

design: Elena Ralls | BFA 2019 FD

materials/ techniques: panga panga wood, hand-rubbed finish

*Tripod Chair* is based on vernacular stools found throughout Africa that exemplify adaptability and intuition. The aim was to create an object that carried these traits honestly and directly, thereby bridging cultures through design.

### **Pattern Program**

design: Ayumi Trubschenck | MFA 2020 FD

materials/ techniques: paper, ink

*Pattern Program* was inspired by the patterns found in traditional Kuba cloth. The designer knew these patterns told a story but could not understand their symbols and narratives. Calling upon her background in typography, she translated the letters of her name to design a flexible, adaptable new pattern.

### **Mabeo Furniture**

Mabeo is a furniture and accessories brand based in Botswana, Africa. Launching internationally in 2006 after 10 years of making bespoke furniture for local commercial projects, Mabeo has consistently engaged the design world since then, collaborating with some of the best designers on significant projects and developing a growing collection of products.

The aim of the brand is to make the work of African artisans available to the world in a considered way and to reflect certain qualities: an essential simplicity of form, an idea of purity, the conscientious use and handling of natural materials, the dedication of the craftsmen and women and the sensitivity of the collaborating designer to the rich aesthetic heritage of Africa.

Designers include Inès Bressand, Francesco Faccin, Patty Johnson, Mabeo Studio, Luca Nichetto, Garth Roberts, Claesson Koivisto Rune, Patricia Urquiola and Vincent Van Duysen.

### **About the Department of Furniture Design at RISD**

Students in the Furniture Design department at RISD embark on a course of study encompassing theory, skills, context, research and professional practices. Drawing from a rich tradition, they are encouraged to experiment and work with a wide range of emerging materials and technologies, developing individual voices through the process of making. The program emphasizes the principles and practice of furniture design as well as the social value of art, design and responsible citizenship.

**About Rhode Island School of Design**

The mission of RISD (pronounced "RIZ-dee"), through its college and museum, is to educate students and the public in the creation and appreciation of works of art and design, to discover and transmit knowledge and to make lasting contributions to a global society through critical thinking, scholarship and innovation. Our immersive model of art and design education emphasizes robust liberal arts studies and conceptually driven studio-based learning in full-time bachelor's and master's degree programs across 19 majors. RISD's exceptional faculty foster student growth and development in extensive specialized facilities, enabling students to become confident, cross-disciplinary thinkers and nimble problem-solvers ready to confront the complexities of global practice in the 21st century. More than 27,000 alumni worldwide testify to the impact of a RISD education, exemplifying the vital role artists and designers play in defining global innovation. Founded in 1877, RISD and the RISD Museum help make Providence, RI among the most culturally active and creative cities in the region. For more information, visit [risd.edu](http://risd.edu) and [our.risd.edu](http://our.risd.edu).

###

A digital version of the press release can be found [here](#).

**Media contacts:**

Michelle DiLello, Blue Medium Inc.

+1 212 675 1800

[michelle@bluemedium.com](mailto:michelle@bluemedium.com)

Jaime Marland, RISD PR

+1 401.427.6954

[jmarland@risd.edu](mailto:jmarland@risd.edu)