

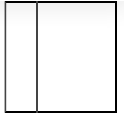
At Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, NOMAD's First U.S. Edition Found an Ideal Stage

From Emirati ceramics and Mexican craft traditions to a François-Xavier Lalanne Mouton, the presentations spanned continents, disciplines and centuries with uncommon dexterity.

By [Elisa Carollo](#) · 06/29/26 1:09pm



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From June 25–28, 2026, NOMAD presented its first U.S. edition at The Watermill Center in Water Mill, New York. Photo by Simon Leung

There’s a constant across NOMAD editions: a spatial storytelling that turns curated showcases of art and design into contextualized narratives. From Monaco to St. Moritz, Capri to Abu Dhabi, NOMAD’s nomadic format has transformed unique historical locations into destinations for art, design and singular creation. Most of the creators exhibiting at the fair resist easy distinctions, embracing practices that move fluidly across categories and are often open to alternative systems of circulation, from special commissions to brand activations. For its U.S. debut, NOMAD could not have found a more suitable stage than Robert Wilson’s iconic Watermill Center, establishing a context-specific dialogue with the experimental, interdisciplinary nature of the center and the eclectic, multilayered collection Wilson gathered over the years, now housed in his apartment and across its spaces. “Robert Wilson created a place unlike any other, where theater, visual art, architecture, performance and experimentation coexist; that spirit feels remarkably aligned with NOMAD,” founder Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte told Observer in a recent interview.

After Wilson’s passing last July, Bellavance-Lecompte chose to frame NOMAD’s inaugural U.S. edition as a deliberate homage to Wilson’s artistic legacy and his approach to human creative expression. Visiting the fair gave one access to Wilson’s world: intimate guided tours of his apartment revealed a singular, encyclopedic and anthropologically attuned approach to collecting, with no distinction between high and low—an ethos perfectly reflected in his scenographies, his stagings and the curation of his everyday life.

Admittedly, NOMAD Hampton’s opening day felt more like an industry-centered gathering of design-world insiders, joined by a few curious locals, but the fair grew busier over the weekend as New Yorkers began arriving from the city. The more than 30 exhibitors presenting in the special venue were split evenly between American and international galleries, with most coming from Europe, where the NOMAD brand is already well established, and the Middle East, where it launched last year in the decommissioned Terminal 1 of Abu Dhabi’s Zayed International Airport.

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“Rooted Movements” presented in partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi. Courtesy of NOMAD | Photo: Ivan Erofeev

Ascending Robert Wilson’s monumental staircase, visitors were welcomed by an enveloping rope installation by Emirati artist Afra Al Dhaheri—a simultaneous act of symbolic and physical embodiment and disembodiment, tracing an ever-evolving sensory and emotional relationship with the space. The installation is part of “Rooted Movements,” a capsule showcase presented in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, which brings together three Emirati women artists: Al Dhaheri, Zuhoor Al Sayegh and Azza Al Qubaisi. Organized in separate clusters, Al Sayegh and Al Qubaisi’s bodies of work engage with the notion of inherited knowledge through materials and

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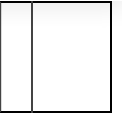
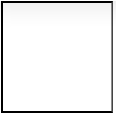
this inaugural Hamptons edition has been a success, and we'd be delighted to return.”



Gallery FUMI. Courtesy of NOMAD | Photo: Ivan Erofeev

Further on was veteran but newly reconceived art gallery Robilant, which brought some of the most expensive works on view, including two prime Andy Warhols, a large mirror by Pistoletto and delightful Fontana ceramics, alongside more design-oriented gems, including the glass creations of Tristano di

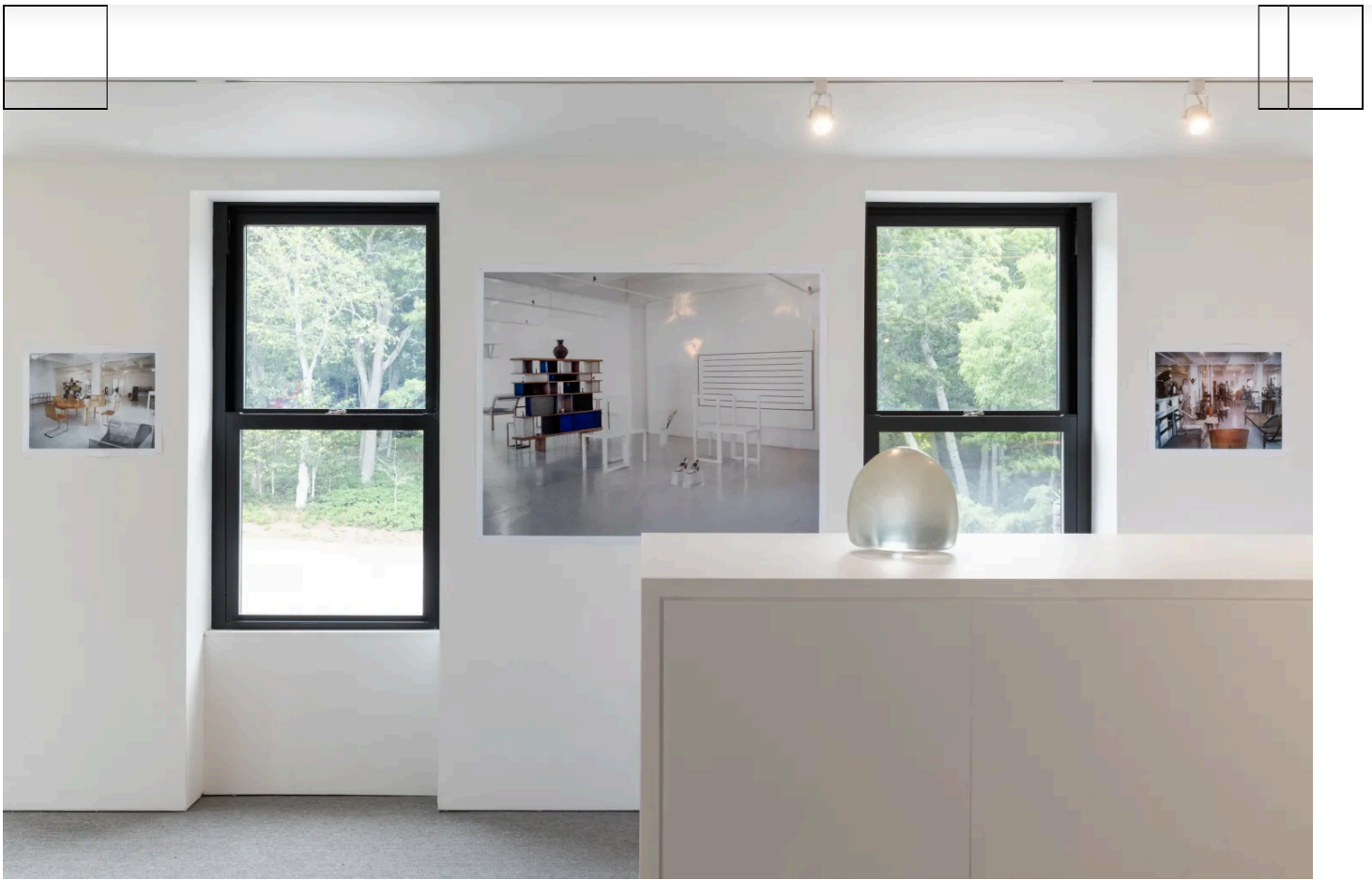
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In the Watermill Center's archives, [NOMAD Hamptons](#) unfolded as a series of presentations moving between art, design, photography and lived space. Curated by [Sophie Dries](#), [Dominique Nabokov](#) Photography's presentation documented decades of friendship, collecting and artistic life between New York and Watermill, tracing Robert Wilson's world through the spaces and people around him. Complementing this, [Bob Wilson's Works](#), curated by [Noah Khoshbin](#), brought together furniture, objects and archival materials associated with Wilson's universe, including his chairs and rare glass works made in Marseille, available in limited editions. Particularly revealing was "Gio Ponti × Robert Wilson: Correspondence," a special presentation exploring the ongoing creative exchange between the two, who shared the conviction that design was simply another form of creative human expression and a reimagining of the world, on a par with art and architecture.

Nearby, New York-based jewelry house [Tabayer](#) presented its Oera Still Stone Series, a capsule of sculptural jewelry conceived as contemporary amulets. Drawing inspiration from [Isamu Noguchi](#), [Barbara Hepworth](#) and devotional objects dedicated to [Inanna](#), the pieces combine 18k gold and natural diamonds with carved stones including jasper, lapis lazuli, chrysoprase and chalcedony, introducing color, volume and asymmetry while extending the dialogue between abstraction and form.

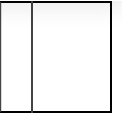
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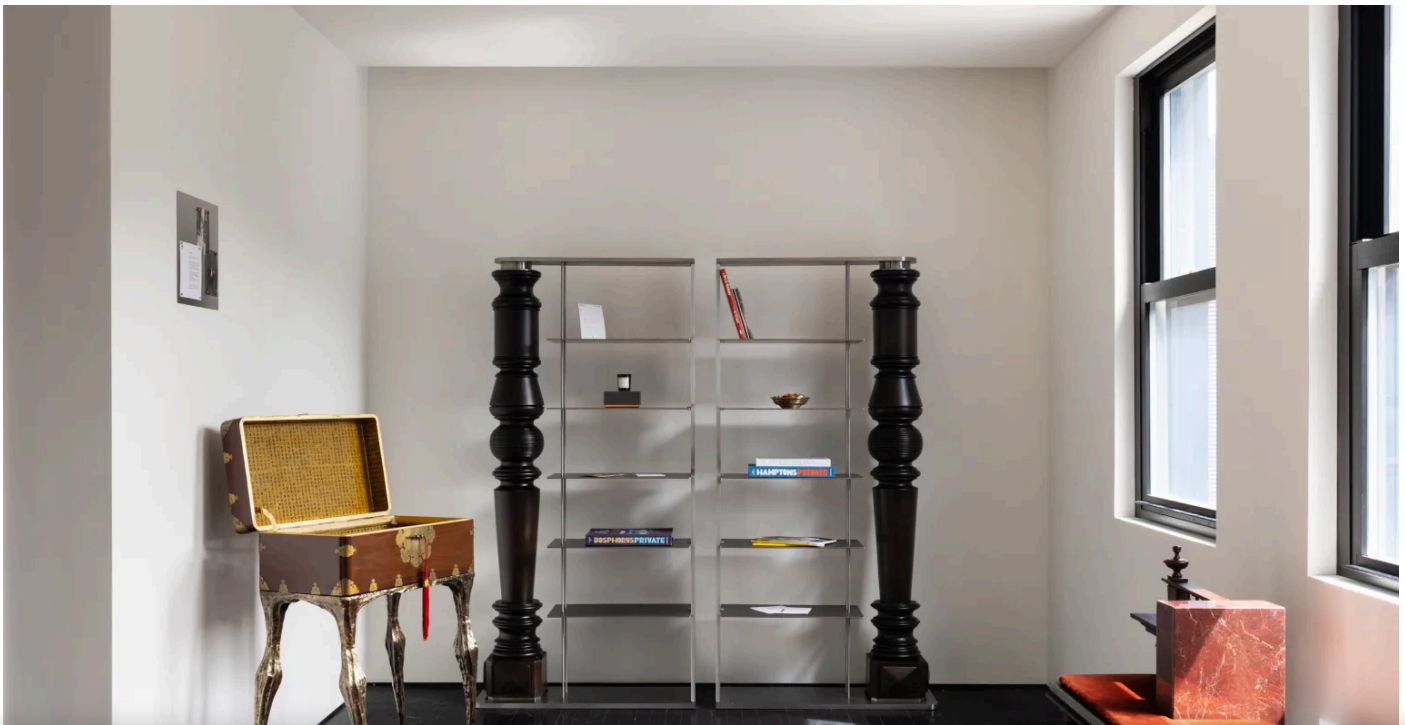
At the heart of the edition lies a reflection on Robert Wilson's artistic legacy and the worlds he created at The Watermill. Photo: Ivan Erofeev

Renowned for its scouting of some of the most compelling designers working today, The Future Perfect brought together a roster of creators whose work is rooted in nature and domestic life, spanning sculptural seating, lighting, vessels and objects in both unique and open editions. Highlights included new works by Chris Wolston—from additions to his Nalgona Chair series to a bronze Betulia mirror and a reimagined Aurora Sofa—as well as pieces by Chen Chen and Kai Williams, Cody Hoyt, Lindsey Adelman, Piet Hein Eek, Olivia Cagnet and others, in a presentation that treated design as both expressive and livable. For Laura Young, managing director of The Future Perfect, the fair proved a valuable opportunity

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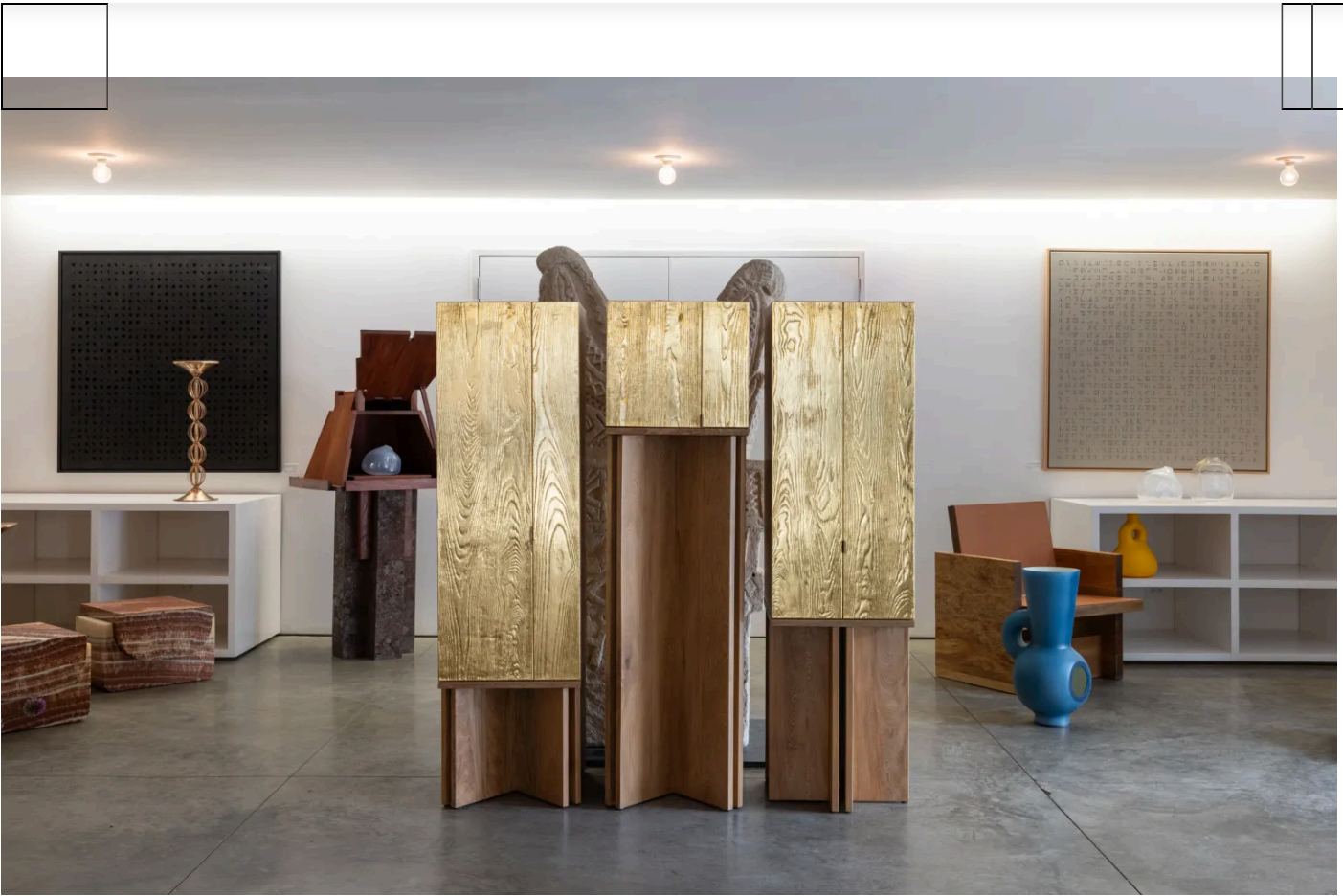
On the lower floor, Café Kalei, a new concept space and coffee shop with outposts in New York and Dubai, brought the design of the radicals, presenting a colorful and vibrant selection of archival and contemporary pieces in conversation with the spirit of Memphis, GUFRAM and Gaetano Pesce. Further along the corridor, in Wilson's book-filled library, Café Kalei also staged a special presentation of Pesce's works, including archival pieces inspired by the designer's travels to Oman, with the throne-like forms, saturated color and playful material experimentation that defined his language. "The Oman Collection" represents one of Pesce's final and most poetic explorations, and the NOMAD presentation served as a preview for two unseen limited-edition projects the group plans to launch during the Abu Dhabi edition, including fragrance-infused design objects.



Café Kalei. Courtesy of NOMAD | Photo: Ivan Erofeev

On the other side of the library, nomadic project Object&Things brought together a group of ceramic works alongside a limited-edition lighting project: Disco Vision lamps by Christian Wassmann, who designed the original shelves for the very library in which the presentation took place. Originally produced in a special edition of 12 to support the Watermill Center, each lamp incorporates upcycled LaserDiscs—a pre-DVD film format—containing a movie set in New York City, creating a shimmering symbolic galaxy of the storytelling possibilities the city can inspire. Another highlight from

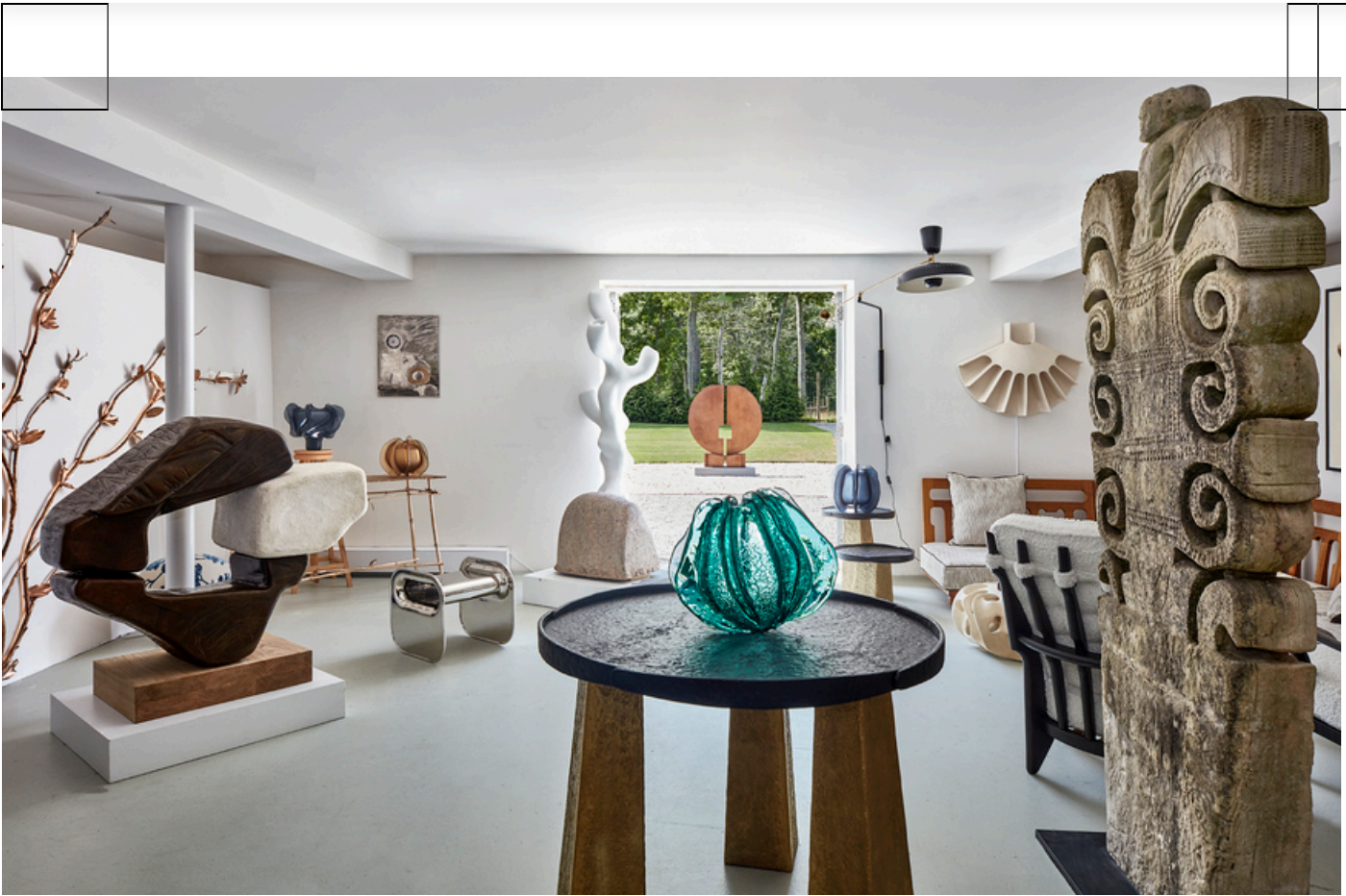
Object&Things was P. Taylor Galantieri's cartapesta vessels, playfully imitating both the veining of



UNNO and K'AB JUUN. IVAN EROFEEV

Several presentations expanded the dialogue between historical design, contemporary craft and material experimentation. Maison Gerard made its first appearance at NOMAD with a presentation reflecting the gallery's evolution from its original Art Deco focus, since its founding in 1994, toward a broader mix of vintage and contemporary design. At the center was an important grouping of furniture by French design duo Guillerme et Chambron, whose warm and functional modernism was evident in armchairs, an expansive sectional sofa and rare multitasking desks. These historical works were placed in dialogue with contemporary pieces such as Barry's hand-formed bronze Blade sconces, Bareff's sculptural ceramic

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Maison Gerald. Photo by Tria Giovan

In the next room, [Tristan Hoare Gallery](#)—a London gallery whose program centers on beauty and craftsmanship across media—paired sculpture by [Nicholas Lefebvre](#), inspired by scavenged ancient and vintage materials and later translated into bronze, with [Kaori Tatebayashi](#)'s delicate ceramic and bronze flowers, priced from roughly \$8,500 to \$35,000. The booth also included textiles by British artist [Suzzy Catalet](#) with a modernist sensibility reminiscent of Léger, as well as works by French artist [Parme Baratier](#), who creates his own herbarium through unique vintage-looking botanical prints. Baratier grows the plants in his own garden, harvests them and fuses them together to form a canvas, then prints a

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historical contexts from which these creations emerged.

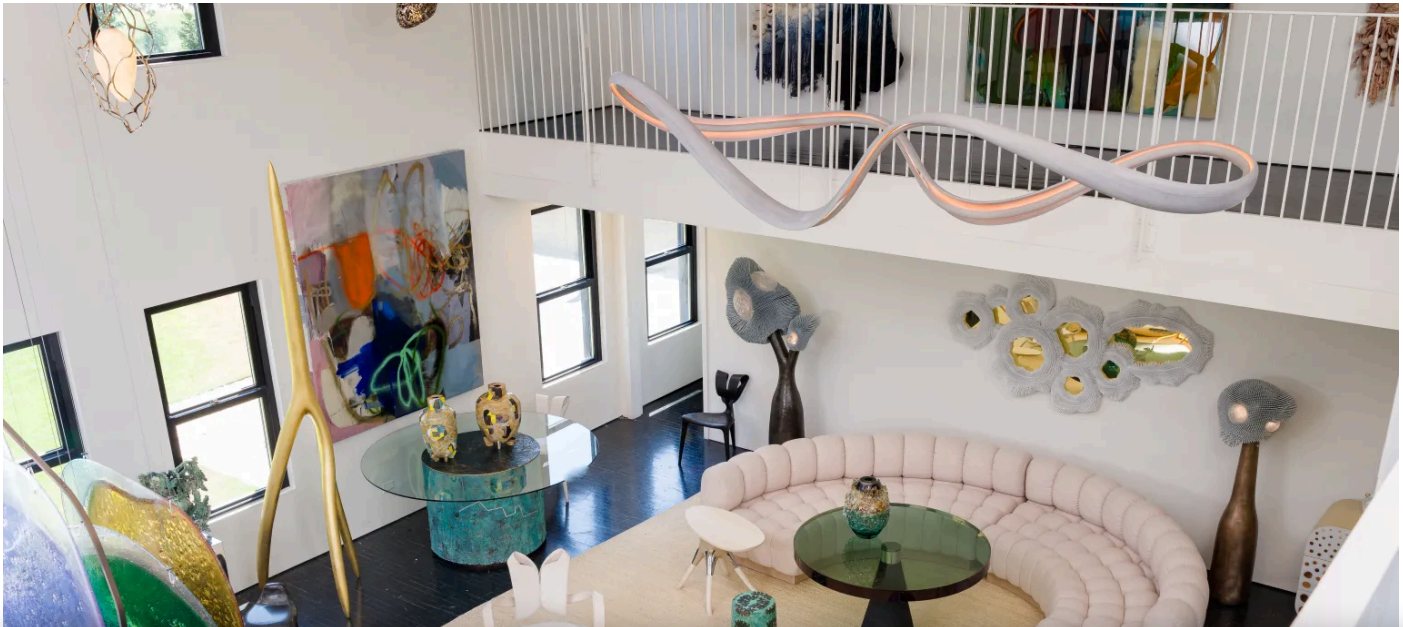
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Rodrigo Simão and Charo Casteres. Next to it, Spaceless Gallery focused on the connection between nature and craft through French and American artists working in marble, bronze and other noble materials. Standout pieces included marble and stone sculptures by Gabriel Sobin, inspired by organic forms and the materials' inherent properties, priced between \$8,000 and \$15,000. As part of a salon-style hanging, the gallery also presented new vintage-inflected photographic works by L.A.-based artist Lara Porzak, their intriguing suspension between abstraction and figuration and between time and space carrying the temporal texture of a past age—a preview of the artist's solo presentation at Aspen Art Fair.

In the more airy main rehearsal space, an expansive showcase of Todd Merrill Studio's roster was anchored by an 11-foot-tall sculpture by Jamaican artist Laura Facey, whose practice transforms felled Jamaican hardwoods into increasingly abstract and spiritual forms that honor the island's landscape and enduring spirit. "We've had a very successful fair at NOMAD, with strong sales and commissions throughout," Merrill confirmed to Observer, adding that they were already looking forward to returning.



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Many of Lehanneur's works draw from the different states of water as a metamorphic universal element defined by movement and transformation—an idea that translated here into a compelling ceramic installation rendering, through varying colors, textures and glazing, the shifting hues of seawater in different parts of the world. Prices ranged from roughly \$12,000 to \$75,000.

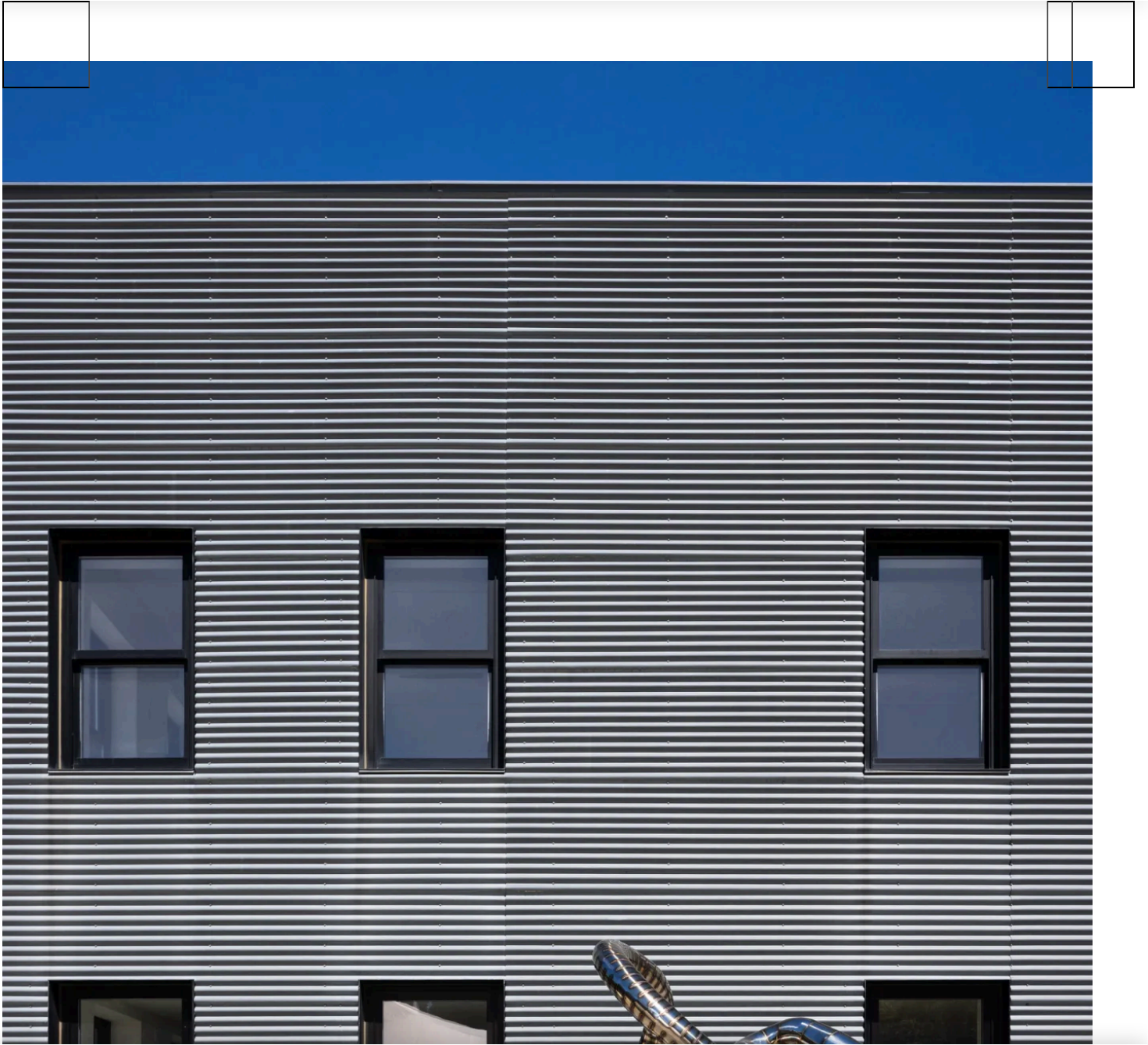
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Moving with equal fluidity across materials, art, design and sound is Sébastien Léon, a French-born, New York-based artist who has transformed himself from creative director to designer and artist. Located in the outdoor space, his sound sculpture and installation *The Echoes of Our Dreams* created an evolving sonic landscape of ambient sound, machine language and transformed birdsong. Inviting close encounters with both the boundaries and affinities between natural and artificial forms of communication, the piece is the first in a future network of interconnected sculptures, prompting reflection on the relationship between the natural world, humanity and the rise of A.I. Léon's work was one of many outdoor installations comprising NOMAD's Sculpture Grounds – Open-Air Group Show, a curated constellation of large-scale works installed across gardens, pathways and outdoor gathering spaces.

The NOMAD formula worked. Its informal format encouraged personal encounters with objects and their

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