



J SQUARED PHOTOGRAPHY



FLAMES OF CREATIVITY

Since picking up a welding torch, former model Meyghan Hill has forged a second career as one of the city's most in-demand furniture and object makers, working out of an industrial DTLA warehouse

By Abigail Stone

Meyghan Hill—who runs her provocative furniture fabrication and design business out of a large vine-covered DTLA loft—first picked up a welding torch after a bad breakup. She was living in Hollywood and faced with an empty apartment. So Hill, a former Ford model, talked herself into an apprenticeship at a machine shop in the Valley. Her first efforts were pieces made from scraps of metal and stone retrieved from the dumpster there. Wielding fire to create something felt empowering.

Her line of furniture and small goods retains that sense of raw energy and feeling, while made in luxuriously elegant materials. There are jagged marble headboards and blackened



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steel consoles; tables, clothed in leather and cinched with brass buckled belts. The work has gotten the attention of everyone from The Clippers, who have 10 of her marble and brass Daniel tables in their lounge, to Swiss luxury timepiece maker Audemars Piguet, for whom she’s designed a custom couch and club chairs. “My work is influenced by the geometry of downtown: the design of the 4th Street Bridge, the outline of the U.S. Bank Tower,” she says.

Welding can at times be a lonely endeavor. So when she first started out, she felt lucky to connect with two other makers, glassblower Uri Davillier of Neptune Glassworks and woodworker Westin Mitchell. Together, they formed The Kohler Street Collective in 2013, a group of downtown craftspeople who worked out of a sprawling studio on said street, located in the Skid Row area. “I needed people around me who were doing the same thing. I thrive on downtown’s energy and talented people,” says Hill.

HILL ON DINING DOWNTOWN: *“My neighbors, Comfort LA, make amazing soul food, including great vegan options. I love the truffle fries on The NoMad rooftop, and Rappahannock Oyster Bar at ROW DTLA.”*

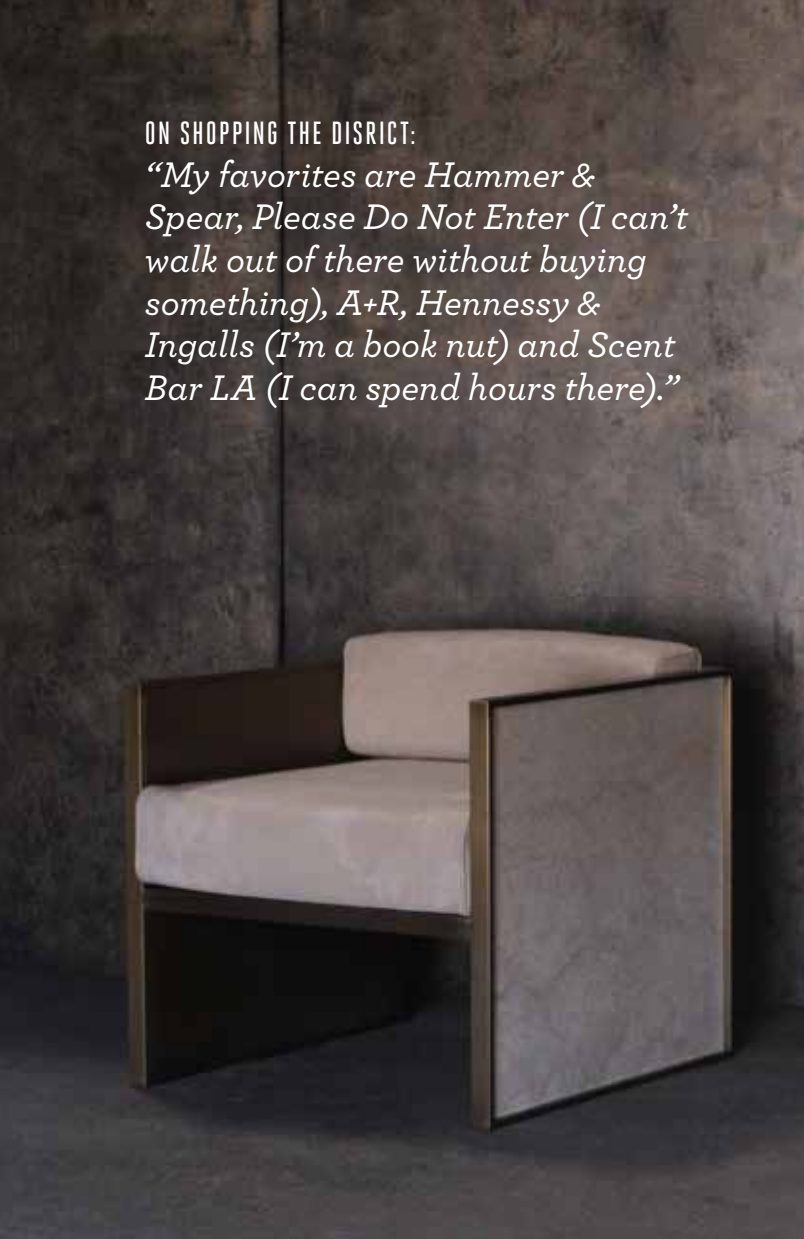
SARINA SALETTA



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ON SHOPPING THE DISRICT:

“My favorites are Hammer & Spear, Please Do Not Enter (I can’t walk out of there without buying something), A+R, Hennessy & Ingalls (I’m a book nut) and Scent Bar LA (I can spend hours there).”



ON DTLA'S BEST COCKTAILS:

“I go for anything spicy like The Rabbit Hole at Apotheke LA or The Old Hickory at Manuela. For old fashioned, I head to Tony’s.”



ON SEEING ART:

“The Broad is hugely inspiring as are Hauser & Wirth, ICA LA, and Wilding Cran. And I love studio visits with artist friends such as Mespel, C.C. Boyce, and Jason Koharik.”

A year ago, as Kohler Street Collective expanded, she moved her shop across the street into a similarly raw warehouse. She continues to share her workspace with fellow creators who inspire her—her studiomates are now art and surface designers Brynn Gelbard and Lisa Donohoe of Londubh Studio.

Hill admits not everyone loves the name of her business, (wh)Orehaus Studios. She had first wanted to call it Orehaus but the url was taken. So she decided to reclaim a word with negative connotations much in the same way she had reclaimed discarded materials and given them value at the start of her career. She says she wouldn’t change a thing about her life right now. “Some people have a little notebook

by the side of their bed where they jot down their ideas. I can just get up and build it right there. I really want to keep that.”

For her, a perfect day in Downtown, would be a Sunday spent with her community of friends. “A Sunday where I pick up ingredients at Urban Radish, the Farmer’s Market on Spring and booze at Flask & Field, then cook, welcoming fellow artists to a table set with their own creations: Uri Davillier’s glasses, my brass salt cellars, candlesticks and place card holders, a tablecloth painted by artist Nick Knudson, coasters by Lindsey Kerns. “We’ve created this beautiful community and so I love an opportunity to come together and celebrate our intense investment in our craft and the lives we’ve created here.”

SARINA SALETTA

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