

AGENCY OF CHANGE

After moving from Antwerp to L.A., Klein Agency's (klein.agency) Jon and Masa Kleinhample lucked into a sprawling bow-trussed warehouse in the Arts District, sourced fabricators and set ICFF abuzz. Now, they're poised to take on the world in their streamlined vision. —*Abigail Stone*



Clockwise from left: Klein Agency's Jon and Masa Kleinhample; Bar, \$4,700; Rocker One, \$3,700.



Abigail Stone: What prompted the move to L.A.?

Masa: When Jon's mother fell ill, we moved our lives here. [Through a book we wrote called *Micro Factories*], we met a lot of amazing craftspeople who kindly opened doors for us. It's how we were able to become so agile and get into the production fairly quickly.

AS: How is living in Southern California influencing your work?

Jon: Our work has a lineage that comes from the strong design scene we were exposed to in Belgium. From the get-go, we were interested in exploring basic furniture archetypes. The main concept was to take these raw materials, like lasercut steel, and fill them in with natural materials to show the beauty of imperfection. L.A. has enabled us to access a wider range of materials and processes and finishes that give it a more California influence. **M:** People told us that you can fabricate anything in this city. And, amazingly, everything we do is within 20 square miles of our studio!

AS: What was the first piece you guys created together?

J: The low rocker with a leather sling. Living in Belgium, I constantly had a bit of nostalgic longing for America...

I was born in Georgia and it was a desire to reach out to those Southern porches. So it was kind of paying homage but done in a new way.

AS: Are you focused on furniture only, or is there more in the works?

J: In Belgium we would open up our shop once a week and host dinners, and within a few months we had a waitlist of like 3,000 people and were getting offers to do restaurants.

M: We realized our attention isn't singular. It's about creating an environment that's not only furniture, but space, food [and more].

AS: I understand you're already starting. Tell us about KleinKlein.

M: When our daughter was born, we were seeking certain things... you're like, 'Shoot, why don't we introduce products for little ones because that's currently part of our universe?'

J: We were looking for a swing because our local park doesn't have one. We wanted something simple out of a good material.

AS: What's next for you two?

J: We're in the midst of creating our showroom downtown. The upcoming months will be about introducing the furniture in a really democratic way, so people can see, feel and touch it.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

While dichotomy implies tension, that's far from the emotion that dictates the working relationship between Blackman Cruz's Adam Blackman and David Cruz, who just launched **Dichotomy 2**, their second furniture, lighting and accessories collection. Consisting of 17 items ranging from the glass Jewel sconce (\$2,625) to the Bombe chest (\$38,000)—it's carefully pieced together from slices of solid walnut—all items are grounded by the same playful spirit that runs through BC's successful partnership: something that has turned their Highland Avenue store into an enduring resource for the design trade and aficionados alike. Pieces celebrate the virtuoso talents of the city's craftspeople, and nod to styles like brutalism to naturalism. Will there be a Dichotomy 3? "We're not *The Fast and the Furious*, you know," teases Blackman. But they are as hotly anticipated. L.A., blackmanacruz.com —AS

Blackman Cruz's Drip coffee table in bronze, \$16,500



DICHOTOMY 2 PHOTO BY DAVID BOSS