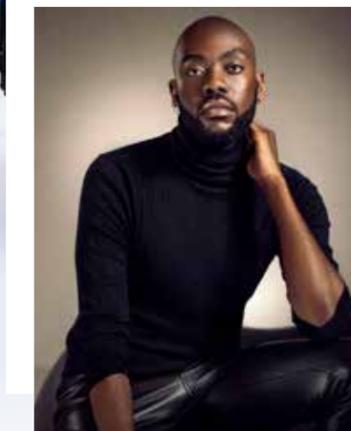


Mnisi's Nyoka console – its storage concealed behind a beaded curtain – was created in collaboration with artisans from Monkeybiz and Bronze Age Studio.

The Snake Charmer

RICH MNISI
SOUTH AFRICA



THE DESIGNER Johannesburg fashion designer Rich Mnisi asserted his design versatility with his first solo exhibition of collectable furniture at Southern Guild earlier this year. With his eponymous clothing label now in its seventh year, the designer has become known for a fusion of contemporary pop culture with traditional African heritage. Whether in fashion or furniture, his bold aesthetic is infused with personal narrative. 'Collectively, my work is inspired by pride. Pride in who you are, where you've come from, and where you're going,' he explains.

FRIGHTENINGLY BEAUTIFUL Titled Nyoka (snake in Tsonga), Mnisi's furniture collection draws inspiration from both the personal and cultural. 'This started with a nightmare,' he explains of his collection. 'My mother dreamt of a snake on her back. When she turned to look at it, she saw an intense green creature, frightening and fluid, dangerous and beautiful.' For a designer

engaged with the formal elements within his work, it's easy to understand the impact of such a dream. 'Fluidity and form always inform my work. They are elements to which I'm naturally drawn, as they're an extension of me.' Snaking lines, referencing his mother's dream, define many of the pieces, from sheepskin seats Vumboni I and Vumboni II to his console, Nyoka. The works also draw inspiration from the Democratic Republic of Congo's Bushongo origin myth. Bumba, the creator god, is believed to have vomited up the sun, moon and stars, and subsequently nine animals that created the world's animal kingdom. 'This is an origin story that proposes that beauty and life could be purged rather than birthed,' Mnisi explains. 'To live is to embrace this duality. To accept that joy and tragedy, light and darkness, dreams and nightmares are connected, orbiting and defining each other.' richmnisi.com; southernguild.co.za

IT WILL TAKE DECADES BEFORE THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL VALUE OF THESE PAPER REMAINS IS RECOGNISED.



The Archaeologist

RITA OSIPOVA
HOLLAND

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THE DESIGNER 'Street posters are like freedom of speech: raw, free and very human. We advertise events, products and political programmes. We deface them with graffiti and gum,' says Rotterdam-based designer Rita Osipova, of her growing collection of salvaged posters. 'When sorting through them, it struck me that I was going through years of data like in a history book – modern archaeology.' Of Dutch-Russian descent and a sculpture graduate of London's Royal College of Art, Osipova considers herself a curator of current culture. Her design language flirts with the ordinary, finding poetry in the unappealing, as in *Shifting Perspectives*, her collection of 'modern artefacts' constructed from street posters.

PAPER WEIGHT 'As digitalisation proceeds, the era of posters is coming to an end ... It will take decades before the anthropological value of these paper remains is recognised as an abundant source of information about what we eat and do, who we vote for and what problems we fight today.' With a passion for archaeology, Osipova has turned to history in the shaping of her works. Her forms nod to England's Sutton Hoo burial site and ancient Greek urns decorated with imagery of daily life. Working with poster, glue and staples, each of Osipova's sculptures represents the city in which its posters were sourced. 'New York's posters are almost pure consumerism with a small but important message – diversity. Posters in Paris are a mix of political statements and fashion. London is mad about music and cultural events, and Berlin can rightly be called the city of freedom, where a dildo ad sits next to a book fair poster.'

ritaosipova.com



Titled 'London', Osipova's paper vessel takes its name from the city in which she collected the street posters used in its construction.