

MODERN LUXURY

Angelo

The Incredible Rise of AARON PAUL

**FALL
FINESSE**

MENSWEAR TAKES A
GLAMOROUS TURN

**WEEKEND
ESCAPES**

JOSHUA TREE, SANTA
BARBARA & MORE!



WILD & REFINED

From top: Artist Chuck Moffit in his studio; the Gozen Chieftan chair made from bronze, steel and leather.



As Chuck Moffit reads his latest furniture collection, *Armor Amor*, we visit the artist at his Mount Baldy studio.

By Maile Pingel

"It helps keep me grounded," says artist Chuck Moffit of the landscape that envelops his Mount Baldy home and studio. Originally from Wisconsin, and after college at the University of Nevada, Moffit moved to Southern California to attend Claremont Graduate University, where he obtained his MFA in sculpture in 2000. "I knew I wanted to end up in a mountain town within shot of an international airport, but I just stumbled into this place." The mountaintop house came

on the market and he knew the owners, and it's been home ever since. "I feel really lucky," he adds. "I need a certain amount of solitude and nature, but also everything L.A. has to offer."

"Anything I need is here," he continues, tossing a ball to his dog, Elko, a McNab—a little-known California breed that originated in Mendocino. About five years ago, Moffit added the 1,800-square-foot studio to the property, which he shares with his longtime partner, Margie Keith, a schoolteacher. Built with the help of friends including the late Claremont architect Rufus Turner, the concrete, steel and glass structure is just a stone's throw from the house. "The shop gets noisy, but I couldn't deal with the intensity of the city all the time," he admits. Set amid evergreens and yuccas, the site is also home to

DESIGN & REALTY
studio visit



From far left: The modernist glass studio in Mount Baldy was designed by Chuck Moffit and his friend, the late Rufus L. Turner; the Stratum side table in steel, brass and leather.



Right: Moffit working in his studio with newly cast pieces for a lighting sculpture. Below: The Kura stool in aluminum alongside the pink foam prototype.

bears, bobcats and rattlesnakes, and Moffit is particularly proud of the bat house he's just built.

The natural world, understandably, often surfaces in Moffit's designs—a faux bois table in cast bronze, a tête-à-tête with flowerlike velvet seats—but more recently, inspiration has come from an altogether different source. "The initial seed came from a show at LACMA," Moffit explains of his latest collection, *Armor Amor*. (The exhibition, *Samurai: Japanese Armor* from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection, was on view during the winter of 2014-15 and explored some 700 years of masterfully crafted battle gear.) "I wanted to produce something at that level: ritualistic, protective and with complicated aesthetic decisions," he says, noting the collection's use of leather, stone, stained glass and cast bronze. "I start with rough sketches and then jump into materials, but sometimes things shift along the way. I think I know where I'm going and then it falls apart," he states humbly—these are one-off, luxury pieces that require time and exploration to create. "But there's always new ground in what I do," he reasons. "Because designs can go into places I don't expect, I have



to figure them out—that can be tense and maybe nothing creative happens for a few days—but I can always see the finish line."

This time, the finish line is an October show at JF Chen (jfchen.com) in Hollywood. "Chuck is at once a sculptor and furniture

fabricator," says the gallery's founder, Joel Chen, who has represented the artist for the last two years. "His work is beautifully utilitarian and balanced." It's a tangible expression of the mountaintop spirit where it was created. ■