



CALIFORNIA
STYLE

The Prophet

California artist and furniture maker Chuck Moffit shapes the future one piece at a time

by **LINDSEY SHOOK** photography by **DAN ARNOLD PHOTOGRAPHY**

HIDDEN IN THE hills of Mount Baldy, California, sits the modernist studio of artist Chuck Moffit. Trained as a sculptor, he embarked on creating purposeful pieces made of various metals, glass and leather that one can engage with rather than just admire. His recent collection—unveiled just before the pandemic struck—presents a prophetic theme for two essentials we all currently need: love and protection. Here, he shares more on his exploration of process and his love of California.

Why did you choose to base your practice in Mount Baldy?

The MFA program at Claremont Graduate University is what brought me to Southern California, which is really close to my current home. I fell in love with the area, and was lucky to have found a special spot in the mountains to build my studio. I think it was more about small decisions along the way that directed me here and not one choice. A mix of free will and fate.

How does living in California shape your approach to the work?

The vastness of the West has been a big influence on me. The location of my studio puts me in four distinct seasons, grounding me in nature.

What about your process is unique?

My work is about the actions that go into it as much as it is about the final product. The end result of my work comes out of a transformative process of a series of actions and techniques I enjoy. I also often use “lost foam” bronze casting, which makes each piece unique. The casting process transforms a cut, torn or stepped-on piece of foam into something one of a kind.

Your new Armor Amor collection—which made its debut at JF Chen just before the pandemic hit—is based upon love and protection, something we have all needed during this turbulent time. Did you know the collection would be so relevant right now?

I always feel like my work comes from the future. But I had no idea that this was where we were going to land. As the pieces developed, the words “future tribalism” also came to mind. The furniture works are objects of power that come from and are centered in one’s vulnerability.

The collection also marks your foray into tabletop. Since you are known for larger-scale pieces, was this a challenge for you?

They are the opposite. The tabletop pieces are a wonderful break from my larger designs. The process is much more free—similar to sketching but in 3D. I head into the studio without a specific intent beyond keeping the smaller scale in mind. I often find that

the accidents and cast-offs in a day of studio play can be recombined into some of the best works.

We love the addition of leather in some of the pieces. What made you move in this direction?

The leather was important to use in excess. It needed to feel wrong when I described it. The tassels on the ARMOR cabinet are nearly three feet long and hang down to the floor. The AMOR bench upholstery is goat hide left raw on two sides. The PINNACLE Club Chair cushions are made from multiple individual hand-colored leather parts, not just stitched patterns. Thankfully, in the end, they make total outlandish sense.

In your opinion, why is it important for California designers to work with local artists?

To me, keeping craft culture alive in your home state is about fostering and nurturing the creative community. On the flip side, in my own collaborative process of working with California-based interior designers, I enjoy creating works that speak to the culture of the West Coast. It’s always a pleasure working with the boundless talents that live and work in California.



LEFT: An exterior view of Moffit's modern studio. **RIGHT:** The ARMOR sideboard from his new ARMOR AMOR collection.



ABOVE: Chuck Moffit in his studio. **BELOW:** The flush mount SAN wall sconce made of bronze and patinated steel, from the ARMOR AMOR collection.