

ISSUE
49

Gray

architecture
interiors
design
culture



sky-high ambition for the win

DESIGNERS LAY IT ALL ON THE LINE—
FROM A VITAMIN D SUPPLY SYSTEM TO BESPOKE DINNERWARE,
EARTHY FALL FASHION TO A SULTRY SEATTLE BISTRO—
INTRODUCING THE 2019 GRAY AWARD WINNERS.

TOUR DE FORCE



FASHION

Hair Affair

Shrines and mausoleums are lavish ways to remember passed loved ones, but the New-York Historical Society's exhibition *Life Cut Short: Hamilton's Hair and the Art of Mourning Jewelry* will showcase an unusual tribute that one-ups them all: human hair jewelry. Opening December 20, the exhibition looks at mourning jewelry, a sartorial craze that dominated Victorian-era fashion. Epitomized by Queen Victoria's public appearances

as a widow, in which she often sported jewelry incorporating the dark locks of the late Prince Albert, the use of hair to embellish jewelry and commemorate the deceased became abidingly popular. Throughout the 19th century, explains Debra Schmidt Bach, curator of decorative arts at the Society, "wearing a lock of hair became more acceptable and fashionable."

Although modern audiences might find the tradition of wearing another person's hair strange, the pieces on display show a high level of craftsmanship, attention to detail, and pure creativity. From an intricate, bronze-colored bracelet

accented with braided brown hair and crowned with small diamonds to delicate gold rings topped with glass-encased strands of hair, *Life Cut Short* overturns expectations by showcasing the artistry and care put into each piece. "I hope audiences will be captivated by something that might sound off-putting," Schmidt Bach says. "*Life Cut Short* dives into the history behind the pieces. The jewelry tells small stories that contribute to something greater than themselves and paint a picture of New York's genealogy."

—Annette Maxon
with Claire Butwinick

DESIGN

Sitting Savage

At first glance, South Korea-born, Seattle-based designer Jay Sae Jung Oh's Savage series looks like piles of junk covered in leather. And that's exactly what it is—but it's also so much more. Made from discarded plastic dollhouses, rocking horse heads, and broken bicycle parts wrapped in individual leather cords, Oh's work is trash transformed into design objects with a message: reduce and reuse.

For the past eight years, Oh has designed upcycled chairs, benches, and side tables composed of plastic artifacts that she sources from recycling centers, friends, and her own household. Each piece is formed gradually, over a months-long process, as Oh glues trash and trinkets together around a wooden chair or table using four kinds of adhesive. Then she meticulously wraps the whole thing in black cowhide threads or natural jute.

One of her first pieces, the Savage chair (2011), is in the Cranbrook Art Museum's permanent collection, and her Savage sofa (2015) has a fixed place at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art.



This December, Oh debuts five one-of-a-kind additions to the series, including a lounge chair, two stools, and two table lamps covered in raw or multicolored leather, at Design Miami. They'll be presented at Salon 94 Design's booth alongside drawings by designer Gaetano Pesce, for whom Oh once worked. The

new pieces, like her previous ones, compellingly juxtapose natural and mass-produced materials to evoke emotion in a way that most furniture does not. "My work reminds people of old memories," she says. "If I can change the way they look at wasting culture, that's good enough for me." » —CB