

ELLE DECORATION N°392 DEC 2025/JAN 2026

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# ELLE DECORATION

DEC 2025/JAN 2026

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## One to watch: Mehdi Dakhli

This year's theme for Design Miami, curated by Glenn Adamson, the former director of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, is 'Make Believe'. It's an instruction to designers to allow us to dream, but also a demand that they take a leap of faith and turn these dreams into reality. Among the creatives entrusted with the task, who will be presenting work at the annual event, is the French-Tunisian all-rounder Mehdi Dakhli. Born in 1988, Dakhli has been on the design circuit for less than two years and is already making waves.

After studying business law and political science in Paris, he took a more creative path, moving to London to curate a private art collection, then collaborating with the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Francis Kéré on the development of Chalets African, private residencies in Gstaad, Switzerland, for which he sourced artworks from African artists including Abdoulaye Konaté and Ibrahim Mahama, and worked alongside respected names such as Joël Andrianomearisoa and Billie Zangewa on site-specific commissions. 'Taking part in the birth of these works was a revelation. It made me want to make things myself,' recalls Dakhli. His eye for detail and insatiable curiosity meant he soon realised this ambition. It's fitting that the project also acted as a space to showcase one





of his first pieces: the 'Amaldies' console (a precursor to the 'Amaldies' desk, pictured opposite). An earlier launch during Collectible New York featured the 'Sidi Bou' chair, whose backrest resembles a motif that appears in Wassily Kandinsky's painting *Loses im Rot*.

Now, Dakhli is bringing new pieces to Design Miami, including the 'Scarab' cabinet. A design rooted in Egyptian symbolism, it is built from ebonised oak and rests on bronze legs. The designer views it as a life-sized amulet, serving as a powerful token of strength. Just like the myths around the insect it was inspired by, the piece is meant to safeguard people's belongings and stories, turning them into cultural heritage for generations to come. Also on show will be a version of the 'Muravey' chair (pictured below) carved from pink ivory (a rare type of wood originating from southern Africa with a deep, rosy hue). The original was crafted from wenge wood, a timber historically used for ceremonial carvings in central Africa. For Dakhli, using materials that have cultural significance and power isn't intended as a gesture to democratise them. Rather, it is a way to dream up and then produce the finest possible versions of his visions. 'I am very French in that way,' he muses. 'To me, nobility doesn't exist. We are all equal, so I feel free to use the best of what is out there.' [mehdidakhli.com](http://mehdidakhli.com)

**The 'Sidi Bou' chair has a backrest resembling a motif that appears in Wassily Kandinsky's painting *Loses im Rot***



WORDS: JANA MORGENSEN. PICTURES: CLOVIS TANGUY. IMAGE COURTESY OF: MEHDI DAKHLI, ACHILLE SALVAGNI ATELIER, TF DESIGN, PERCARIO QUECCHIA, GALERIE SIGNÉ

## Four more to see

*Planning to visit Design Miami?  
These are the highlights to look out for...*



### ◀ 'Orbit' by TF Designs

These three celestial-inspired furniture pieces were originally shown in resin at this year's 3 Days of Design, but artist and founder Tina Frey is bringing them to Miami in bronze. [tf.design](http://tf.design)

### ▶ 'Architettura trumeau' by Gio Ponti and Piero Fornasetti

Design Miami is full of the new and next, but this is a chance to view a classic. Created in 1951, it marks the height of the collaboration between two greats, and will be shown by Achille Salvagni Atelier. [achillesalvagni.com](http://achillesalvagni.com)



### ▲ 'Slug Chair' by Rich Aybar

The gooey slither of a slug may not be obvious design inspiration, but for Aybar, whose piece will show at Delvis (Un)limited Gallery, it was the starting point for the look of this cast-rubber chair. [delvisunlimited.it](http://delvisunlimited.it)



### ▼ Galerie Signé

For its first participation at Design Miami, this French gallery, founded in 2021, will present a lounge chair by Marie & Alexandre, a multi-disciplinary duo interested in the potential of materials. [galeriesigne.com](http://galeriesigne.com) **ED**

