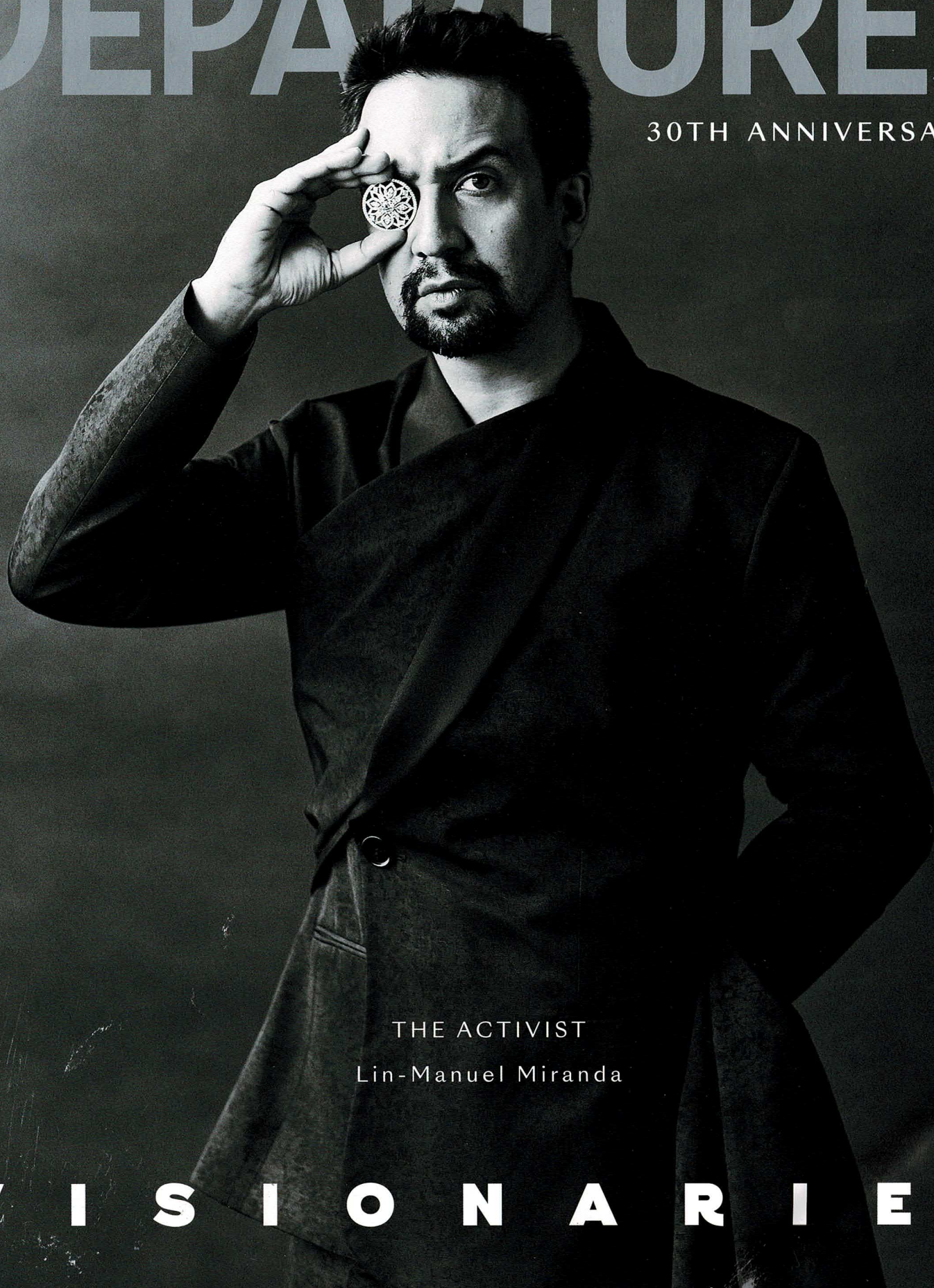


SEPTEMBER 2019

# DEPARTURES

30TH ANNIVERSARY



THE ACTIVIST  
Lin-Manuel Miranda

V I S I O N A R I E S



# LIVING

ON DISPLAY



**Craft Is King** In our automated age, the painstakingly handmade objects created by today's top artists and artisans seem both nostalgic and daringly modern. *by Pilar Viladas. Photo-illustrations by Ruth van Beek*

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**THE WORD CRAFT** has always denoted something made with a high level of skill and quality. But it has also been a victim of changing tastes and fads. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, craft was often regarded—wrongly—as something folksy, and was eclipsed by a new wave of industrial design and the collector-driven craze for design art. And in the past decade, *craft*, like the word *luxury*, has been so overused that it has lost much of its meaning. But real craft endures in makers today who use wood, stone, ceramics, metal, glass, or fiber as a creative medium. Aric Chen, the curator at large at Hong Kong's M+ Museum and the curatorial director of this year's Design Miami, says that one of the keys to this work is that "it takes time, and time itself is a luxury; it also takes time to appreciate on the part of the viewer." Craft, he says, "equals rigor, no matter what the material."

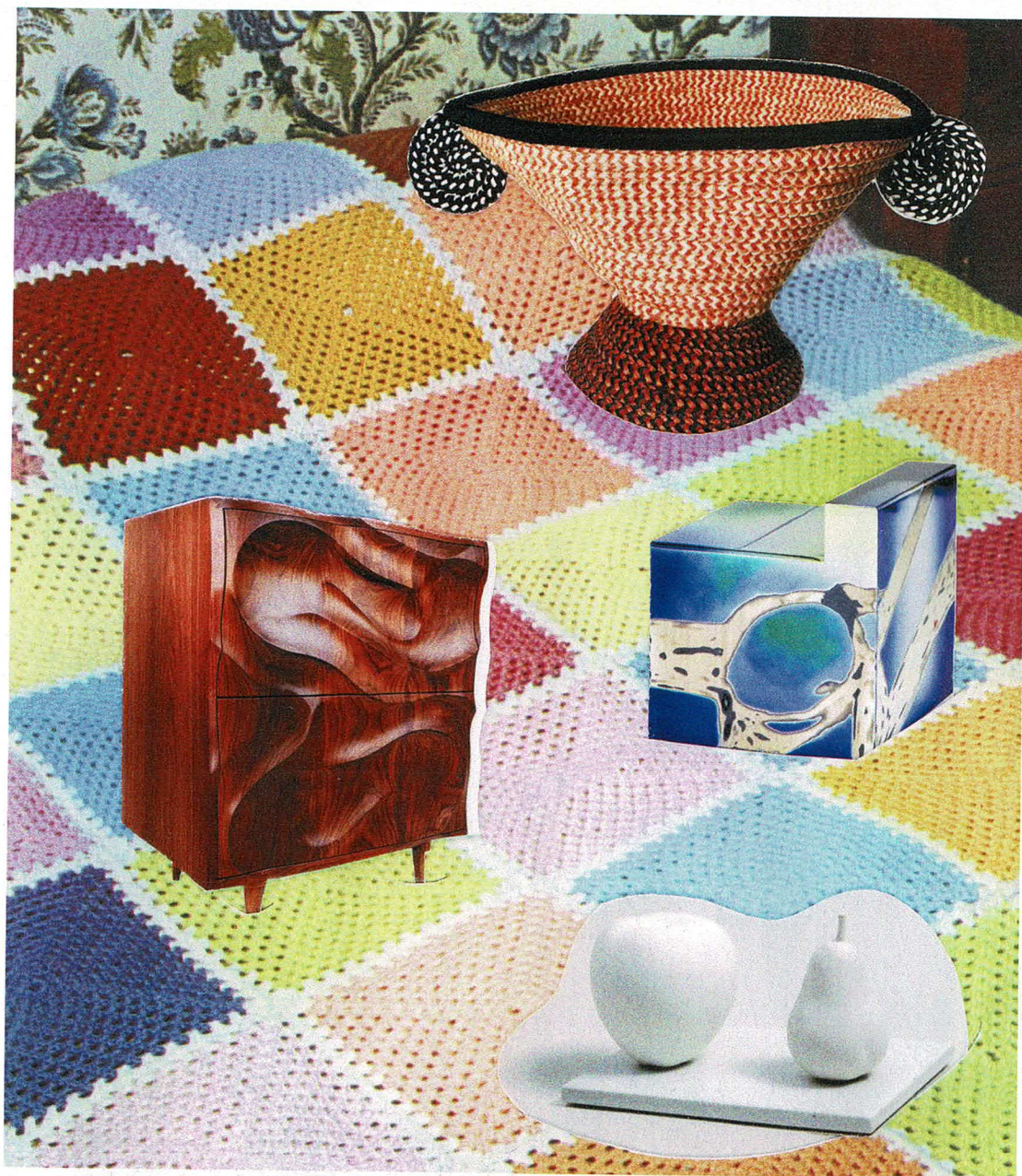
In the world of design, some people never thought otherwise. The Loewe Craft Prize, which was conceived by Jonathan Anderson, the Spanish fashion brand's creative director, to honor important contributions to contemporary craft, is in its third edition. Among the works by this year's 29 finalists, two of the most striking projects were woven. In his Geisha Handbag Series, Deloss Webber, a Washington State-based artist, fills rattan baskets, some of which have bamboo handles, with pieces of granite, rendering them non-functional yet arresting. Inspired by Japanese ikebana baskets, Webber's pieces add



Recently exhibited handmade works by **Vincenzo De Cotiis** transform rugged materials into works of design with an aggressive, otherworldly aesthetic. *From top:* The DC 1101 coffee table is made from recycled fiberglass, resin, and perforated cardboard; the interior of the DC 1611 mirrored wall cabinet is made from both silver-plated and polished brass; the DC 1626 sofa has a sculptural brass base and hand-dyed velvet mohair; the 10-foot-long DC 317 low cabinet is made from recycled fiberglass. [carpentersworkshopgallery.com](http://carpentersworkshopgallery.com).

*Previous page, clockwise from top:* The six-foot-long, solid-walnut Trophy Cabinet by designer **Aaron Poritz** gives traditional tambour sliding doors a luxe look by painstakingly matching the veins of wood used on its doors' veneers. [cristinagrajalesinc.com](http://cristinagrajalesinc.com). **Floris Wubben's** glazed ceramic creations—vases, tables, shelves, and more—are made by squeezing clay through purpose-made extrusion devices. This table lamp is one of a kind. [thefutureperfect.com](http://thefutureperfect.com). Rising Dutch talent **Laurids Gallée** uses a wood-dyeing technique of his own creation and pairs those materials with new takes on traditional marquetry to fashion objects such as this Pyromaniac's Table. [lauridsgallee.com](http://lauridsgallee.com). **Adam Silverman**, the former studio director of the design brand Heath Ceramics, has exhibited work like this vessel at various institutions, which includes a show this fall at New York City's Cooper Union. [friedmanbenda.com](http://friedmanbenda.com).





what he calls “an ironic narrative of fashion” to “the primal combination of fiber and stone.” The work of Korean artist Youngsoon Lee—whose Cocoon Top Series 1 is a totem-like stack of eight baskets made of rolled and woven mulberry paper from old books—is an attempt to revive a venerable but long-neglected craft.

Today’s artists embrace a wide range of materials and techniques, including new or reimagined ones. For the Milan-based architect and artist Vincenzo De Cotiis, materials can “connect, and in doing so establish a dialogue between them,” to create what he has

called a “perfect imperfection.” His rugged DC 1807 table, for example, is made of cast brass and recycled fiberglass, with a resin top in which Murano-glass beads and marble are suspended. De Cotiis says the contrast between the marble and glass creates “a perceptive short circuit.” At a comparatively monumental scale, *Ode*—a piece he created for an exhibition organized by Carpenters Workshop Gallery at this year’s Venice Biennale—is a series of angular sculptures that are mirrored on one side and painted fiberglass on the other. Inspired by menhirs, or ancient megaliths, the “opaque and vibrant” piece, De Cotiis says, questions

*Clockwise from top:* The Kylix Bowl by designer and artist **F Taylor Colantonio**, who studied in the States and is today based in Rome, is made from polypropylene and wool yarns. ftaylor.co. **Pablo Limón** experiments with layer upon layer of pigmented silver nitrate, poured by hand and then sanded to create uniquely vibrant stools and side tables. patrickparrish.com. **Anat Shifan**’s *Still Life in White with Apple and Pear* is part of the Israeli-American artist’s Still Life porcelain series of centerpieces, inspired by notions of idealized forms of nature. hostlerburrows.com. **Caleb Woodward**’s chest of drawers is hand-carved from walnut with drawer pulls hidden inside the swirls on the front. collectiveartdesign.com.





“the significance of raising walls,” and “the sense of identity that we all seek in a sense of belonging.”

Aaron Poritz, a designer and artist whose studio is in Brooklyn, started working in ceramics and wood at an early age. After studying architecture, Poritz decided to design furniture in wood. Among his limited-edition pieces, which are shown at New York’s Cristina Grajales Gallery, Poritz’s Tambour collection of cabinets takes traditional tambour doors and adds the natural patterns of veneers made

from woods like black walnut. “A lot of my pieces are frames for naturally occurring phenomena,” he says. Poritz also creates ceramic vessels, and has been exploring sculpture. He worries that “the space where the authentic and the real are actually happening is quite small.” But if his work is any indication, that space is only getting bigger. As Chen puts it, craft is “a never-ending story that speaks to a profound desire, a human need to find meaning in things and how they’re made.”

Finalists for the Loewe Craft Prize include (top) Korean artist **Youngsoo Lee**’s Cocoon Top Series 1, which is made from mulberry paper, [loewe.com](http://loewe.com); and **Deloss Webber**’s Geisha Handbag Series, made from *susutake* bamboo, rattan, and granite, [rovzargallery.com](http://rovzargallery.com).