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Thomas Barger's Recycled Paper Pulp Sculptures Are a Must See

Each piece of this young artist's work is a trip down memory lane

TEXT BY
SAMUEL COCHRAN
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Thomas Barger poses in his Brooklyn studio.

**SALON 94
DESIGN**

12 E 94th Street, New York, NY 10128 | 646-672-9212 | www.salon94design.com | info@salon94design.com

Thomas Barger knows New York City's recycling schedule by heart. On pickup day, he sets out ahead of the trucks, snatching bags of shredded paper. "It's eco-friendly but also economical," Barger says of the material, which he blends into pulp and applies to simple chairs. Wonderfully wacky—with cartoonish forms and vibrant paint jobs—his furniture and sculptures have seduced dealers Paul Johnson and Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, who are giving Barger his first solo show at [Salon 94 Design](#) this month.



A trio of recent chairs created using his signature paper-pulp technique.
Courtesy of Salon 94 Design and Thomas Barger

Consider it a breakthrough for the 25-year-old, who moved to the city in 2014, having grown up on a farm and studied architecture in Illinois. He quickly found work under architect Christian Wassmann, then artists Jessi Reaves and [Misha Kahn](#), whose practices dissolved any notions about what one could or could not do. "I'm not trained to make furniture," admits Barger, who is now expanding his techniques—building his own timber frames, experimenting with resin, and incorporating rocks from the creek where he played as a kid. One new piece is inspired by his mom folding laundry, another by his family's Sunday suppers. As he puts it, "I guess I'm feeling nostalgic." salon94design.com