

5 Things T Editors Like Right Now

A by-no-means exhaustive list of the things our editors (and a few contributors) find interesting on a given week.

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Thomas Barger's show "Growing Up," at Salon 94 Design. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94 Design

Brilliantly Pulpy Furniture

The 25-year-old furniture designer and sculptor Thomas Barger has worked in the studios of fellow New York-based artists Misha Kahn and Jessi Reaves, but perhaps his most formative posting was a dog walking job he took some years ago. While out with his charges one day, he says, "I noticed these big bags of paper outside of various police stations, and I decided to experiment with the material, and loved its malleability." He turned the discarded paper into pulp, which is now the defining component of his emotively globular furniture: undulating chaises with playfully humanoid limbs, perforated butter-yellow high-backed chairs that call to mind waffle fries, and honeycomb-like armoires evocative of ancient cave dwellings — all finished with the gently rippled texture of adobe.

Barger's first solo show, "Growing Up," currently on view at Salon 94 Design in New York, explores the designer's coming of age. "When I came out to my family this past year I crossed a threshold that I didn't anticipate of growing up," says Barger, who spent his childhood on his family's farm in Illinois. "Coming out made me dissect all these layers that made me who I was and realize who I wanted to be. I navigated these reflections through the utilitarian sculptures found in the show." One dove-gray doughnut-shaped bench is embedded with rocks from a pasture on the Barger family's land, while the "Love Me, Protect Me Chair" — a pair of seats connected by a sculptural popcorn bowl — is a meditation on his parents' roles in his life. Increasingly, Barger says, "the work is becoming less furniture based and more focused on sculpture." This summer, he will head back to Illinois, to help on the farm and gather material. "Growing Up" is on view through March 31, at Salon 94 Design, 1 Freeman Alley, New York, salon94design.com — A.N.H.