

SIGHT UNSEEN

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THE 2020 AMERICAN DESIGN HOT LIST, PART III: RYAN PRECIADO

by The Editors



Los Angeles, ryanpreciado.com

A Central California-bred designer of Chumash Native American and Mexican heritage, Ryan Preciado makes work that references both identities — highly lacquered pieces that nod to the car culture he grew up with, and mindful, built-to-last pieces that remind him of a childhood spent with his Native American grandmother.

What is American design to you, and what excites you about it?

That phrase, “American design,” feels like something that will never make sense to me — in the same way defining “American” for me is a constant conversation. If I’m being literal, the first thing that comes to mind is cars and rock and roll, and a sense of being naively optimistic. If I’m talking about my own approach, it’s both referential and also the curiosity that drives an idea.

But what excites me about exploring “American design” is the thought of making something disarming and inclusive.

What are your plans and highlights for the upcoming year?

An exhibition I curated for South Willard gallery in Los Angeles, called “Down Hearted Duckling,” will be ending in the beginning of 2021. I couldn’t ask for a nicer way to start the year off; I’m really lucky to have had the opportunity to organize that. Throughout my life, I’ve been culturally trying to piece myself together — my heritage is Chumash Native American and Mexican — and I was fortunate enough to give that opportunity to others. To explore themselves and be proud of where they come from and who they are, as I have through the five artists I chose: Diana Yesenia Alvarado, Mario Ayala, rafa esparza, Magdalena Suarez Frimkess, and Alfonso Gonzalez Jr.

I also just got a new studio where it will be a sort of appointment-only showroom in the front. I’ll be

busy filling that up with current and new pieces of furniture. I have zero furniture right now, which is funny being that it's the main thing I make. I have to make everything from the sofa to the doorknobs. I'm looking forward to it. It should start to look like something within the next couple months.

Lastly, I'll be working on a show for Canada Gallery that's taking place towards the end of the year in New York alongside a friend and artist, Matt Connors. Since the day I met Matt, he's always been really generous with his knowledge and has also been very encouraging. I'm honored that he's included me.

And as always, I'll be trying not to take myself too seriously.

What inspires or informs your work in general?

A constant inspiration is my culture and my family and my upbringing — the people and places I spend time with, and my Chumash Native American and Mexican heritage — as well as the West Coast subcultures I grew up loving, an example being car culture. All of these things have affected me dramatically in one way or another, so I'm always tapping into it.

When it came to the upholstered Nipomo pieces I make, the dimensions came from me going off a memory of playing in my Grandma's garden as a little kid. I was just a child, so the plants and flowers seemed massive. The dimensions became exaggerated like most memories — but most important, the garden was comforting and I was hoping to give that feeling to whoever sat in those chairs.