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ANTIQUES AND DESIGN SHOW



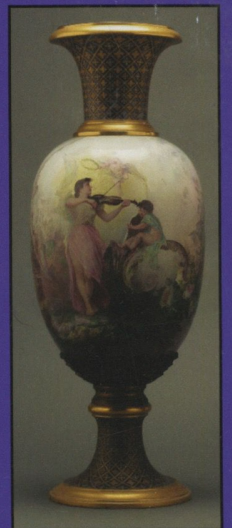
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**The Del Mar
Antiques
Vintage Collectibles
& Decorator Show**



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MEASURE FOR MEASURE: THE DESIGNS OF CHARLES HOLLIS JONES

Aclaimed designer Charles Hollis Jones believes that “half measures avail us nothing.” Charles puts this adage to use everyday in his design business, and it has become the guiding principle that drives him to perfection in his practice.

Growing up on a farm in Indiana, the work was hard and the days were long. Charles’ work ethic was molded not only by the necessity of laboring on his family’s farm, but by the values of his parents who held in high regard the fortitude and integrity they believed came from performing “an honest day’s work.” Telescope to the future and one might, on first impression, think that the design choices Charles has made in the last forty-years are a study in incongruity: Often called “the father of acrylic” Charles designs furniture and accessories that are deliberately high-style and

exploit the high-tech industrialized materials of acrylic plastics and nickel plated steel. This design aesthetic, on the surface, seems far afield from the earthy and natural landscape of life on an Indiana farm, where one might expect the use of organic materials and straightforward, unassuming designs befitting a country or ranch setting. But a deeper, probing investigation of Charles’ designs reveals that the farm boy can not be separated from the farm.

Charles cites his father’s trade as a restorer of wood covered bridges in Indiana, and his mother’s quilt making, as providing creative inspiration for his sleek, visual forms that feature transparent construction and achieve a bold, graphic effect of silhouette and geometric structure. From watching his father work on these restoration jobs,

Charles saw “so many bridges exposed to the skeletons of their frames,” and this experience gave him an understanding of the underlying structural framework, and engendered an appreciation for the stark beauty and strength revealed in the uncovered, complex forms. The designs of the “Metric Line” most overtly exploit this concept of exposed infrastructure, where steel and acrylic meet at right angles to connect the frame, recalling the modular constructions Charles would build with his Erector Set when he was young. [insert image of “Metric Line”--features armchair & ottoman w/ yellow upholstery, table & teacart]

Charles also believes that the geometric outlines that appear in his work are an echo of the intricate patterns his mother pieced together to form the designs of her hand-stitched quilts. These early boyhood experiences fueled Charles’ intellectual curiosity for all things designed and set him on the path to create a stylistic language all his own.

Viewing Charles’ recent recreation of his interior design and furniture installation in



“ Metric Line” from Charles Hollis Jones



the public rooms of the original Arthur Elrod House, Palm Springs, confirms that his design brain is tuned to a singular frequency. [insert image of Elrod House]. At the request of Dwell magazine, Charles was asked to restage these rooms and recapture the spirit of modernism in interiors that was fresh and radical when it



was first introduced in the 1960s and 70s.

The sensation that Charles has created with the placement of his water-clear acrylic furniture is all about refined silhouettes and dynamic sweeping lines that make the pieces appear to float above the ground, subverting the reality of their solid mass and sturdy construction by fooling the eye into thinking they are weightless and transparent. He has also combined the boldest, most basic geometric shapes within the arrangement. Essentially, the outlines of the various furniture designs are based on circles, squares, rectangles and triangles.

The "Tube" coffee table is a compelling example of the conjoining of rigid and organic geometric forms: the top is a triangle and the base is a fluid series of snaking arcs. In this design, Charles pays homage to the legendary sculptor and designer Isamu Noguchi who decades earlier created the so called "Boomerang" table. The "Tube" coffee table is an updating of the "Boomerang" design as Charles imagines Noguchi would have created if

he were still living today--making the same aesthetic decisions, as to the thickness and visual weight of the acrylic components-- and had chosen to work in plastics.

The most recent reminder that the Indiana farm is never far from Charles' drafting board is his design for the "Apple Chair" (2000). [insert images of front & back of Apple Chair] The newest of his product line, the "Apple" pieces demonstrate Charles' objective to connect his designs back to nature. The twisted, branch-like elements that comprise the back and leg support are based on tree forms and evoke the sensation of wild, uncontrollable growth, evinced by the spiraling branches that reach around the chair and form the frame. And the dangling red apple is the ultimate design tease as it is pregnant with symbolism. But for Charles, this design has returned him solidly to his roots as the son of Indiana farmers. Although he arrived in the big city of Los Angeles some forty years ago and has made Southern California his home and location of a successful design business, he will be the first to tell you that his boyhood experiences on the family farm in Indiana still surge through his veins, and that his "Hollywood Luxe" designs are "as American as apple pie."

Submitted by Jo Lauria, Specialist in Modern & Contemporary Decorative Arts, Craft, and Design.

