



LEFT Tarek ElKassouf
BELOW Melting Lamps from the Ode To Marble collection
BOTTOM A piece from his Minerality I series of experimental sculptures

PIECE offering

Lebanese designer and sculptor Tarek ElKassouf is telling a new story for a new world



One of the region's most distinctive designers, Tarek ElKassouf, has been exploring his artwork under the "new normal." The award-winning sculptor reflected on his time in lockdown and found that in a period of global quiet, his creativity found the space to thrive. "Like many in our field, I have found that the time in stillness has been full of creativity," he shares.

The Beirut-born artist, who is currently based in Sydney, curates authentic and unique furnishings, that can propel any living space into an art display. His cross-disciplinary approach with raw elements such as marble and stone showcases his craftsmanship and ability to harness something truly extraordinary from an ordinary substance. "After working in the corporate world as an architect and urban planner for eight years, I decided to start my studio in 2015," he shares. "It's an obsessive drive with my personal projects that make me feel alive – and it was time for me to start telling my story." His most recent collections, Flame, Contained; Ode To Marble; and Minerality III reflect the themes and challenges the world currently faces. "I am exploring that through the prism of projects and artworks that break down old narratives by telling new stories; a reflection of the *page blanche* that we are all facing. Environmental and global issues have broken through to the fore," ElKassouf explains.

His work ranges from large projects, including statement pieces of furniture to interior items and collectable pieces, such a paperweights and candle holders. The Ode To

Marble collection, which ElKassouf describes as "a series that tries to challenge the physicality and materiality of minerals," is home to the standout Gold Cut Tala Noir limited edition paperweight, a bold cut of solid marble layered with 24ct gold.

"A central theme of my work is identity and belonging," he says, with his pieces going on display in galleries and museums in New York, Riyadh, Kuwait, Beirut, and Dubai. Despite the uncertainty that this year has brought, ElKassouf has channeled new ideas for his upcoming projects. His Flame, Contained series features the Ritual tray, which gives an abstract feel to a traditional oil burner, with its base taking the form from an astray. "It is important to realize the need to relate to objects and spaces around us," he shares. "The objects that fill our everyday lives are our constant companions. They should be made with care, treated with respect and even affection. They are things of beauty." *Somethingbytarek.com* **VM**



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