

# The West's Best New Designers

Meet our inaugural class of emerging designers of the west—and steal a thing or two from their playbook.

By Sally Kuchar and Nena Farrell  
Photographs by Thomas J. Story and Stephen Kamifuji

For over a century, Sunset has given readers the freshest and most inspiring home design ideas: We've covered the birth and rebirth of mid-century modernism, tracked color trends, touted tiny homes, and predicted prefab. This award is the evolution of that mission, and a way to honor the people who are changing the way we live today. For our inaugural awards we're focusing on California, where designers like Charles and Ray Eames, Cliff May, and A. Quincy Jones elevated the Western experience. Here are the designers carrying that tradition forward today.



STEPHEN KAMIFUJI



## MEET THE 2020 CLASS

### KATE MILLER OF ELWORTHY STUDIO

Kate Miller has a resume across fashion, merchandise, and textiles...and across oceans. "When I was living in Shanghai, I suffered from some health problems caused by environmental toxins. I knew some things were out of my control, but I educated myself so that I could improve the quality of the air inside our apartment," said Miller. And that led her to create toxin-free home textiles.

**@elworthystudio**

Type of work: **Wallpaper and textile design**

Established: **2015**

Based out of: **Half Moon Bay**

#### WHY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN IS THE WAY TO GO:

Miller's designs use materials that are friendly to the body and the planet. "The textile industry produces a huge amount of waste, and I refuse to be part of the problem," she says. She sources linen from a sustainable flax plant, and gets her paper from resources certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. "I hope that we see rapid growth of mindfully produced textiles and wallpaper—products that are sustainably produced and healthy for the home, that are made to last, that don't deplete natural resources or pollute our planet."







**“Jonathan’s work is the perfect example of putting the FUN in functionality.”**

**- Advisory board member Jake Rodehuth-Harrison**

## **JONATHAN ENTLER OF ENTLER STUDIO**

Jonathan’s had his hands in clay his entire life, spending many years throwing clay in his home studio, dreaming up ways to make a viable business plan. In 2015, he launched his first collection. Now he and his team operate out of a 3,300 square-foot studio with its own showroom in the heart of northeast Los Angeles and create and ship 40 lamps a month.

**@entler\_studio**

**Type of work:**  
**Ceramic lighting design**  
**Established: 2015**  
**Based out of: Los Angeles**

### **WHERE YOU CAN SEE HIS LIGHTING:**

1. The Entler showroom in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles
2. Alfred Coffee in Pacific Palisades and on Melrose Place in L.A.
3. Forty Five Ten showrooms in Dallas, Aspen, Manhattan, and Miami





## CONCRETE COLLABORATIVE

The Balsis sisters grew up watching their dad work with concrete as a civil engineer, and after getting started in interior architecture, Kate Balsis started working with concrete as a finish material. She started Concrete Collaborative in her Brooklyn garage, but has since relocated to Southern California. "It was always our dream to move to California," says Balsis.

**@concretecollaborative**

Type of work: **Family-run concrete and terrazzo finishes**

Established: **2004**

Based out of: **San Clemente**

## EMERGING DESIGNERS

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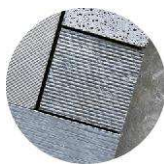
**CONCRETE COLLABORATIVE TILES TO BUY:**



**SSS Collection**  
This minimalist design by Sarah Sherman Samuel is one of Kate's favorites. "There's something about the arches, lines, and simplicity that makes it so versatile," she says.



**Venice Tiles**  
This terrazzo tile uses natural stone aggregate and comes in a range of colors and designs. It's also designed to be highly durable and forgiving as a surface.



**Zuma Tiles**  
The Zuma tiles use ribbing, raking, and board form to create a variety of different surface textures and finishes. The tiles are designed for both indoor and outdoor use as both tiles and wall panels.



## ANNIE RITZ AND DANIEL RABIN OF AND AND AND STUDIO

Founders Annie Ritz and Daniel Rabin met in architecture graduate school. "We worked on several student projects together," says Ritz. "We joke that we've always worked together!" Their studio takes a holistic approach to architecture, working on everything from full renovations to ground-up construction.

**@andandandstudio**

Type of work: **Architecture**

Established: **2017**

Based out of: **Los Angeles**



### THREE BUDGET TIPS FOR YOUR NEXT ARCHITECTURE PROJECT:

1. Define the project—and your budget. "If you have a tight budget that can't be exceeded, define the scope of your project and stick to it," says Ritz.
2. Explore multiple ideas. "Construction is an expensive endeavor. It's best to start work when you've explored all of your options and you're ready to make decisions and commit to an idea."
3. Think about how you live. "By addressing larger ideas about living, certain themes will emerge and there may be unexpected solutions."

CONCRETE COLLABORATIVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JENNIE CORTI/COURTESY OF THE BROWN STUDIO; COURTESY OF CONCRETE COLLABORATIVE (4); AND AND AND STUDIO, FROM TOP: STEPHEN KAMFUJI, THE INGALLS/COURTESY OF AND AND AND STUDIO (3)





## NOZ NOZAWA OF NOZ DESIGN

Noz's colorful interiors are taking the Bay Area and beyond by storm. "I want to continue to evolve to push the boundaries of what a home can represent and look like. I don't ever want to have a style that you can pin down." Noz decided to make the leap to launch her own interior design firm in 2014. Fast forward to today and she's averaging 30 projects per year.

**@noznazawa**  
 Type of work: **Interior design**  
 Established: **2014**  
 Based out of: **San Francisco**



### FAVORITE COLORS RIGHT NOW:

Brown and ultramarine for fabrics and finishes. "I love brown. It's a warm neutral that's often overlooked." Crayon peach—literally the color of peach Crayons—for tile and walls.

### COLOR SHE'D LIKE TO SEE LESS OF:

Light gray. "It's beautiful, but I see it everywhere. It's time for a new neutral. I think we'd all fall back in love with light gray again if we saw less of it."

## EMERGING DESIGNERS

### PETER SHELDON OF SHELDON CERAMICS

Peter Sheldon has been creating ceramics for years, with training spanning the East Coast, Montana, and even New Zealand, but some of his biggest inspiration comes from centuries past. "Humans have been practicing ceramics for thousands of years across the continents, and each culture has its own tradition," says Sheldon. The attitude of reflection also keeps him humble towards his craft. "Someone, somewhere, in the last 2,000 years has done it, and probably did it better than you," he says.

**@sheldonceramics**  
 Type of work: **Ceramics**  
 Established: **2014**  
 Based out of: **Los Angeles**

### How to choose the perfect ceramics:

**Trust Your Touch.** Sheldon's advice for finding great ceramics can be applied to any craftsman work. "Fundamentally, quality craftsmanship is apparent," he says. "When you pick up those objects, you can appreciate and realize their worth."

**Choose Joy.** "When it comes to pottery, choose what you love," says Sheldon. "If you love a piece of pottery, that's what matters. It's not always about price, especially when you're bringing these items into your home."



NOZ DESIGN, CLOCKWISE FROM NOZAWA; STEPHEN KAMIEJUIJ; © COJIN PRICE PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY OF NOZ DESIGN (3); SHELDON CERAMICS, FROM LEFT; COURTESY OF SHELDON CERAMICS (2); STEPHEN KAMIEJUIJ



## TAYLOR DONSKER

After graduating from USC School of Architecture in the heat of the recession, Taylor found himself at a crossroads. After extensively traveling throughout the United States and Asia he found his true calling: woodworking. Wood as a material jumped into the forefront of his mind—particularly in relation to architecture—so he bought a few tools and slabs and started tinkering in his parents' garage. He's been going nonstop since, creating beautifully intricate, sculptural furnishings for select clientele. While his roots are humble, Taylor now works out of a massive 6,000 square-foot studio in Santa Monica.

**@taylordonsker**

Type of work:

**Woodworking**

Established: **2012**

Based out of: **Santa Monica**



**WHY CALIFORNIA WALNUT IS THE BEST WOOD EVER:**

**“It has an incredible color range. The grain patterns tend to be really dramatic and have a lot of figure. It’s durable, dense, yet it’s still easy enough to work with.”**





## ANGEL CITY LUMBER

(Todd Cooper, Jeff Perry, Brady Zaitoon, and Charles DeRosa)

Carpenter Jeff Perry saw a problem that needed fixing. He'd be buying wood at the lumberyard, and then witness big trees throughout Los Angeles being mulched up when they had died. He was perplexed. Just because a beautiful tree aged out as a living specimen didn't mean it wasn't useful anymore. And so Angel City Lumber was born. The company specializes in urban lumber from downed Los Angeles trees, and operates out of a 10,000 square-foot warehouse in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. They recover between 15 to 30 trees a month—a lot of eucalyptus, cedar, oak, ash, and pine—and then mill, kiln-dry, and sell the wood to give it a second life as something beautiful.

Type of work: **Salvaged lumber from fallen Los Angeles trees**  
 Established: **2015**  
 Based out of: **Los Angeles**

## EMERGING DESIGNERS

### The very best reclaimed lumber yards in the West

**PNW**  
**SALVAGE WORKS**  
 2024 N Argyle  
 Portland, OR

**Southwest**  
**RANGWOOD RECLAIMERS**  
 16908 I-40 Frontage  
 Albuquerque, NM  
 By appointment only

**Islands**  
**WAIMANALO WOOD**  
 41 Waikupanaha  
 Waimanalo, HI

**Mountains**  
**MONTANA TIMBERS**  
 2506 Jackrabbit  
 Belgrade, MT



ANGEL CITY LUMBER, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JAMES BAIGRIE; COURTESY OF ANGEL CITY LUMBER; STEPHEN KAMIFUJI; STEFAN BISHOP, FROM TOP: COURTESY OF STEFAN BISHOP; STEPHEN KAMIFUJI; CHRIS FORTUNA

## STEFAN BISHOP

Is it sculpture? Is it furniture? For Stefan, it's both. "What I do is diverse. I'm not a traditional furniture maker, so rarely do I use traditional woodworking techniques or finishes." Everything Stefan creates is experimental. Every piece has a custom finish on it. Sometimes it's as simple as washing the wood with ink. Sometimes it's a layer of acrylic, a layer of water-based finish, an epoxy glaze...everything you can imagine off the finishing shelf he's used, sometimes in multiples. The resulting pieces are dramatic objects of art as much as furniture.



**@stefanbishop**

Type of work: **Experimental art and design**  
 Established: **2012**  
 Based out of: **Los Angeles**





## SARA BENDRICK OF SARITA LANDSCAPE DESIGN

After graduating from Cal Poly in landscape architecture, Sara Bendrick was interested in designing public spaces—but a bad economy drew her first to a job doing apartment landscape maintenance while finishing her degree and then to a residential design-build company as a post-graduate. This led her to strike out on her own, and to become host of a DIY Network landscape show. Now, she's also an expert on adding value to yards and is the author of *Big Impact Landscaping: 28 DIY Projects You Can Do on a Budget to Beautify and Add Value to Your Home*.

**@sarabendrick**  
**Type of work: Landscape contracting and design**  
**Established: 2012**  
**Based out of: San Diego**



## Easy ways to add value to your yard:

**Upgrade the front yard.** “A lot of people build out their backyards, but the front yard makes the first impression,” says Bendrick. Her advice? Do something low-maintenance enough that it’s easy to upkeep, while still packing some personality.

**Try a low-key DIY.** Bendrick’s personal favorite? A dry creek bed. “All it takes is a little hard work,

but it’s a permanent fixture with little upkeep,” she says. **Don’t kill your outdoor space.** While artificial turf has become popular because of the low upkeep, Bendrick warns against using it in your entire yard. “It can contribute to the heat island effect, and we need landscapes to cool down our properties,” she says. 🌿

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: IRINA ALEXANDROVA, GRANT SUKCHINDASATHIEN, STEPHEN KAMIFUJII (2), MIK SADIER, STEPHEN KAMIFUJII, RYAN GARVIN, PHOTOGRAPHY; BESS FRIDAY; HAMISH ROBERTSON; STEPHEN KAMIFUJII; DANIEL N. JOHNSON; @DANIELNJOHNSON

## MEET THE DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD

Sunset tapped a handful of outstanding luminaries in California’s architectural and design community to select the next wave of noteworthy designers.

**Marie Turner Carson**  
 @m.elle.design  
 Interior designer and cofounder of M. Elle Designs

**Douglas Burdge, AIA**  
 @burdge\_architects  
 Founder Burdge Architects, owner Buhaus Built

**Natalie Myers**  
 @nataliemyers  
 Principal of interior design firm Veneer Designs

**Breegan Jane**  
 @breeganjane  
 Interior designer on HGTV’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition”

**Catherine Kwong**  
 @catherinekpong  
 Principal of interior design firm Catherine Kwong Design

**Sally Breer & Jake Rodehuth-Harrison**  
 @etcforshort  
 Cofounders of interior design firm ETC.etera, interior designers of the 2019 Sunset Idea House

**Regan Baker**  
 @reganbakerdesign  
 Principal of interior design firm Regan Baker Design

**Stephen Kenn**  
 @stephenkenn  
 Furniture designer

