

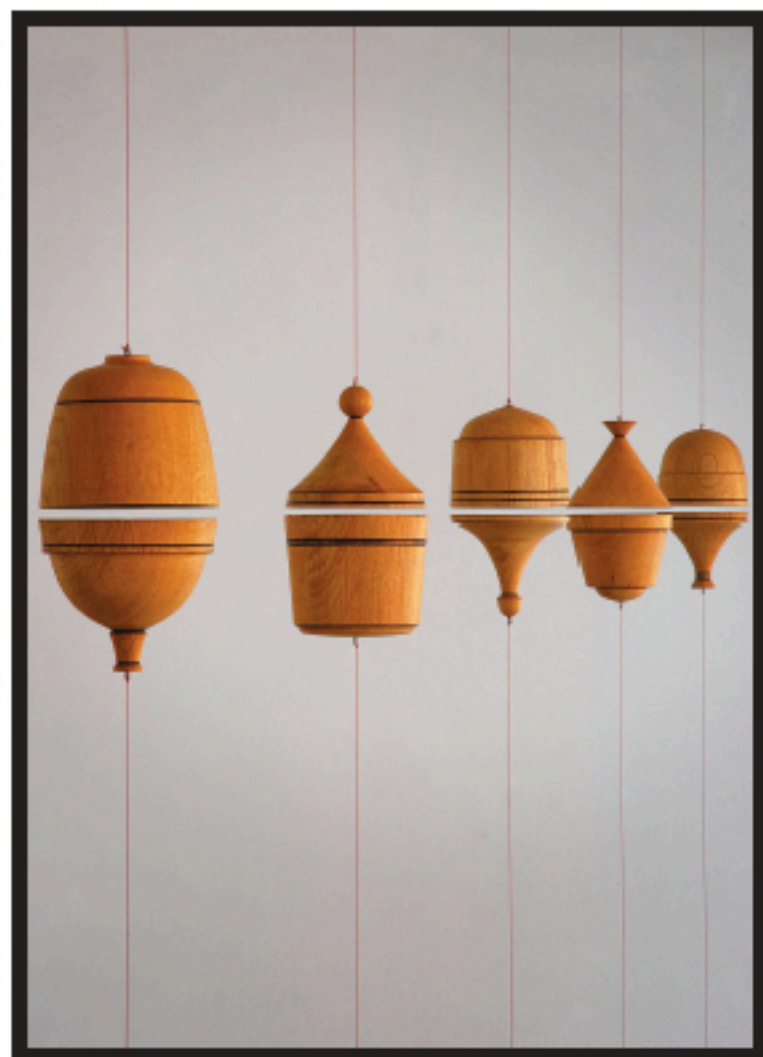
# Scanning the Horizon

Maria Wettergren has an eye for the innovative, and all things Scandinavian.

BY SUSAN BOULLIER



Grethe Sørensen's *Headlights* (top), *Rush Hour* (above) and Eske Rex's *Measuring Space*.



IMAGES COURTESY OF MARIA WETTERGREN

**"Some of the strongest design** of the 20th and 21st centuries has come from Scandinavia," says Maria Wettergren, whose Paris gallery specializes in contemporary Scandinavian design. "I think the secret is the special link to tradition combined with something quite minimal, focused and innovative. The designers I represent are not creating decoration, although of course there is a decorative element, but also intellectual, philosophical content with a historical link based on reflection and research."

Following art history studies at the University of Copenhagen, Wettergren moved to Paris to run Dansk Møbelkunst Gallery in 2002. When she de-

cided to "go contemporary" in 2010, she did so by starting her own gallery because "there was a niche in the market that hadn't been taken—so I took it!" Among the first designers she worked with were Mathias Bengtsson, Astrid Krogh, Ditte Hammerstrøm, Louise Campbell and Rasmus Fenhann. "They were the cornerstones of my project," Wettergren says. "They are constantly innovating on a deep level, and I love this type of radical beauty that makes us dream about the future."

At Design Miami/Basel, Wettergren will present Bengtsson's sculptural and poetic *Growth* chair. Interesting counterparts to this organic piece are the strictly geometric *Kubo* work by Fenhann and

the simple brilliance of the magnetic *Measuring Space* pieces by Eske Rex. Many of the designers Wettergren works with combine the heritage of Scandinavian craftsmanship with radical technology—like the highly covetable fiber-optic weaving compositions by Krogh and the remarkable tapestries translated from photographic pixels by Grethe Sørensen.

"A good work of design today is one that can maintain a dialogue with different artistic disciplines. It is important too that the designer makes us forget the complicated technical procedures and creates something of beauty that is both poetic and playful," says Wettergren.



# FROM THE GROUND UP

In his latest work, Mathias Bengtsson plays equal parts mad scientist and horticulturalist.

BY BRENT LEWIS



Mathias Bengtsson's *Growth chair*,  
edition of 12, Galerie Maria Wettergren.

**Mathias Bengtsson has introduced** the *Growth chair*, the first in a series of beautiful and innovative works based on the principles of natural growth. "We should learn from nature," says Bengtsson, "and be inspired to solve problems in the same way that it does."

For *Growth chair*, Bengtsson created a virtual world within a purpose-built computer program. In this digital garden he planted a seed which car-

ries the DNA of a chair. "The *Growth chair* is about being inspired by nature to try and find new forms and new shapes." Bengtsson embedded within the seed certain structural parameters but otherwise left the organism to grow freely, in the scale of a plant, through an entire life cycle. An edition of 12, the chairs are a snapshot of a specific moment from the same life cycle, each different from the next as the chair continues to grow.

Exploiting advanced technology but finally cast in bronze, the chair's hyper-organic form is grounded and balanced by the use of the ancient material. After casting, the bronze returns to Bengtsson's studio for polishing and finishing. Typical of his practice, *Growth chair* starts and ends in Bengtsson's hands. "I've always used technology, but have an artist background. I draw, do clay and work with my hands."