

# american craft

San Antonio  
Don't Mess with  
the Arts in Texas!

A Celebration  
of Mid-Century  
Modernism with  
the Ačkermans

## ZOOM

An up close guide to books, galleries, people & places



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### Product Placement Paul Loebach

"I was searching for an industrial wasteland," says furniture designer Paul Loebach on why he moved into a former knitting factory in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a gritty neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. "I loved this place. It's dark and empty. The area's a bit of a no-man's-land."

It's from this apartment/studio—where designs hang on the walls, books overflow off the bookshelves and his experiments with various materials cover the floor and any other available work space—that Loebach designs pieces that many said would be impossible. "People tell me I can't do something and then I do it. I'll be like, 'I know what you're saying but I'm going to ignore it,'" he explains. "You have to understand the basic principles of design and then mess with them."

Loebach's exposure to design came early in life. He is descended from a family of German woodworkers. "My dad taught me woodworking—that was our manly thing we did together," he says, laughing. "I was seven years old and running a joiner!" Always suspecting he'd be an

artist, he solidified his interest in art and design during an extended trip to France, where he lived with his parents' friends. He went on to attend University of Cincinnati and discovered industrial design. "Even though my family were craftsmen and my dad was an engineer, I had no idea that design existed as a career," Loebach says. "Nor did anyone else." But after a year at the university, Loebach left. "The program was too regimented, and I'm not a big compromiser. Industrial design, yes. I just needed to figure out how to do it."

Loebach went to Colorado and then a friend studying at Rhode Island School of Design called and said "I'm at RISD. You'd like it." He was right. RISD's combination of practicality and creativity was what Loebach wanted, a synthesis reflected in his recent designs. Referring to the process as "aesthetic athleticism," Loebach gives traditional styles a new twist through such technology as rapid metal printing and computer-controlled machinery. "I'm exploring how to push the limits of new manufacturing processes, traditional materials and the interplay of form and space," he says.

Pushing the limits has sparked Loebach's interest in what the future offers with technology and society. "To do something new you often need to use a new technology because everything else has been explored," he explains. "What's new in people's lives and our culture makes that exploration worthwhile. I try to have an awareness of what's going on now and translate that through my work. I'm trying to make things that are relevant to our time."—s.s.

**Gimme More!**  
[paulloebach.com](http://paulloebach.com)

### Hot Spots Eye Candy

Gallery shows, listed A–Z by state. View complete calendar: [americancraftmag.org](http://americancraftmag.org)

AZ / Mesa

**Mesa Arts Center:**

*Androgyny: New Work by Sergei Isupov*  
to Aug. 2

[mesaartscenter.org](http://mesaartscenter.org)

Isupov's large ceramic heads, visually arresting and emotionally alarming, evoke the tragic characters of a Dostoevsky novel.

CA / San Jose

**San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles:**

*Connections: Small Tapestry International*  
to July 26

[sjquiltmuseum.org](http://sjquiltmuseum.org)

Textile artists expand their horizons while shrinking dimensions, connecting technique and concept in riveting new work.

CT / Guilford

**Guilford Art Center:**

*Craft Expo 2009*

July 16–18

[guilfordartcenter.org](http://guilfordartcenter.org)

Visitors from near and far flock year after year to one of the most anticipated events of the region to discover and rediscover the importance of American handmade objects.

DC / Washington

**Smithsonian American Art Museum:**

*Jean Shin: Common Threads*  
to July 26

[americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu)

Another's trash is Shin's treasure as she breathes new life into the castoffs of consumer society, using them to create striking large-scale installations.