

CRYSTAL LIZED™

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IN HIS MUCH-VAUNTED INDUSTRIAL DESIGN WORK, DROR BENSHETRIT EXPLORES THE DUALITY OF THE PRODUCTS THAT SURROUND US. FOR *CRYSTALLIZED*, HE CREATES A LIGHT OF SIMPLE COMPLEXITY. *ARIC CHEN* REPORTS

Photographer: DARRIN HADDAD

Dror Benshetrit takes nothing for granted. Since arriving in New York in 2002, the 29-year-old, Israeli-born founder of Studio Dror has been making objects that are more than what they seem. His blockbuster Vase of Phases collection, introduced by Rosenthal in 2004, is a meditation on fragility: its cracked-looking pieces are cast from originals that he whacked with a hammer.

His new Folding Table, for the Italian manufacturer BBB Emmebonacina, becomes a writing desk with a flip of its top, while his collection of one-off porcelain jewellery, introduced last year

for Marithé and François Girbaud, bursts with spiny baubles cast from clumps of fur.

The common thread is transformation and duality—between soft and brittle, delicate and durable, and different states of being. Benshetrit combines a poetic sensibility with a designer's love of technique, imbuing uncomplicated acts with surprising intricacy.

"I like to explore the idea of opposites," he says, sounding like the Design Academy Eindhoven graduate that he is. (He also worked at the Paris office of Li Edelkoort, the school's influential, trend forecasting director.) "But I do it in a simple way," he adds. Which is precisely the case with his lamp for *Crystallized*.

Indeed, the design begins plainly enough: two black squares, one of which is framed in tubular incandescent lights, intersect at diagonal corners. From their

edges, however, clear monofilament strands weave together 6,400 crystals in grids that, pulled at successive angles, morph into sweeping parabolas. From the side, the crystals, chosen in a smoky colour, form a pattern with an almond-shaped opening. From behind, where they're clear, they seem to fan out like a cobra poised to strike.

"I was looking at how a hard-edged geometric system can become curvaceous and feminine," Benshetrit says. He may be bridging opposites, but the results are singularly dazzling.

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