

RON ARAD

FISHES & CROWS 1985-1994

Fishes & Crows 1985 - 1994

Glenn Adamson

How deep is the ocean? How high is the sky? In Ron Arad, we have a figure of tremendous range, who found his comfort zone in the very act of extending his reach. *Fishes & Crows* is the first focused gathering of his early work since 1989—the year of his exhibition at Vitra Design Museum, *Sticks and Stones*, a project that this one echoes down to its title.

For reasons this essay will go on to explain, these objects serve as a highly relevant template for cutting-edge design today. This is not to say, however, that his early work wasn't completely of its era. The most significant critic to write on Arad in the early stage of his career, Deyan Sudjic, explored the “rough and ready quality that chimed well with the grittiness of youth styles of the time,” from punk clothing and album covers to dystopian science fiction.¹ Sudjic also traced in detail Arad's jousting relationship with the period's boom economy, and his alliances with other key figures of the time, such as his peers and collaborators Neville Brody, Nigel Coates, and Danny Lane, and one of Arad's early patrons, Rolf Fehlbaum, Chairman of Vitra.

The only thing that hasn't aged well in Sudjic's writings on Arad is their preoccupation with category: the question of how to place him in relation to sculpture, craft, and design. In the 1980s, the boundaries of those categories were still well-policed, and the thing that was initially most striking about Arad was his flagrant disregard for that kind of territorialism. Even as prescient a critic as Sudjic could not have predicted what was so exceptional about Arad would become a rule unto itself; so he settled for the formulation that Arad was “an artist whose subject is design.”²

¹ Deyan Sudjic, *Ron Arad: Restless Furniture* (New York: Rizzoli/Blueprint, 1989), p. 33. See also Sudjic, *Ron Arad* (London: Laurence King, 1999).

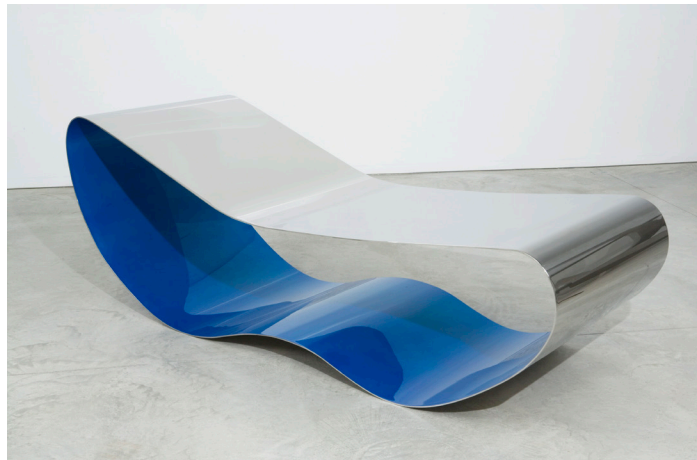
² Sudjic, *Ron Arad: Restless Furniture*, p. 20.



Installation view: *Ron Arad, No Discipline*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2008-2009)

In retrospect, this verdict seems slightly misguided. What Arad really did was to expand the possibilities for design, by developing a modus operandi that was grounded in autonomous production, and focused primarily on material experimentation. This distinguished him sharply from the other main developments in progressive design in the 1980s, which tended to emphasize stylistic concerns: the sophisticated postmodernism of Memphis, the glib mannerism of Philippe Starck, the cartoon classicism of Michael Graves. As these image-conscious approaches fell out of fashion, hard, Arad's process-based approach rose to dominance. The design scene of today is largely populated by figures working from his playbook of formal invention through self-invented techniques.

One of the secrets of Arad's success in these years was the way that he maintained the stance of a belligerent outsider, while remaining very much in the thick of things. For the exhibition *Nouvelles Tendances* for the Centre Pompidou in 1987, he installed a conveyor belt for the purpose of crushing up furniture—a hilariously overstated statement of disregard for the past.



Forrest Myers (b. 1941), *250 MPH* (1981)

The design world at the time had a small footprint, and it's tempting to read such gestures as mainly about clearing space for him to maneuver. Yet Arad did have precursors and peers, and was responsive to their work in nuanced ways. In addition to those in the so-called "creative salvage" movement in London—the aforementioned Danny Lane, as well as Tom Dixon and Mark Brazier-Jones

—there was Forrest "Frosty" Myers in New York, who started bodging industrial materials into sculptural handmade furniture as early as 1981. But the most significant forerunner of Arad's approach was Gaetano Pesce, the Italian-born *maestro* of avant gardism. In *Italian Fish* (1989), Arad paid explicit homage to him; but in truth, much of what he made in the late 1980s had at least a bit of Pesce in it. The two shared a proclivity for approximate craftsmanship, in which the form is realized with far more vigor than precision. Certainly there were big differences between them. Pesce used mainly plastics and Arad mainly steel, Pesce's sensibility was more humanist and Arad's more abstract, but their results were similar in their unpredictable, expressionist energy.

Though one can draw these correspondences to other designers, Arad himself had a very different role model in mind: "I'd read Marcel Duchamp's biography: the beginning bit where he says he never had to worry about money."³ And indeed, his first designs were specifically based on the Duchampian "assisted readymade," or altered found object. It was a strategic decision: Arad had limited financial resources, but easy access to the avalanche of industrial remnants that characterized Britain at the time. The best-

³ Ron Arad *Talks to Matthew Collings* (London: Phaidon, 2004), p. 35.

known of his "blind dates with an object," as Arad likes to say, is the *Rover Chair*—the leather seat of an old-fashioned automobile, complete with its original lever-activated reclining mechanism, held within a custom-built metal frame. In the same year of 1981, Arad realized his *Puch Stool* incorporating the leather seat of an Austrian-built scooter, and a series of *Aerial Lights*, using a car antenna and an existing electronic remote-control system.

Perhaps the most compelling of these readymade works came a couple of years later with the *Concrete Stereo* (1983), in which factory-made audio components are sunk into wet concrete: "as it was setting I could actually arrange the thing casually, as if it wasn't arranged."⁴ Fewer than ten were made, each one unique; today they are among his most sought-after works, with examples at the Victoria and Albert Museum and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The *Concrete Stereo* has often been interpreted as a gesture of apocalyptic ruination—something out of the films *Mad Max* (1979) or *Blade Runner* (1982). For Arad, though, the appeal of it was completely the opposite. He'd discovered a means of assembly that afforded the possibility of intuitive composition. This was something he had sought from the get-go, as the name for his workshop and showroom One Off indicates. But initially, his dependence on the readymade limited the range of his expression to ad hoc aesthetics.⁵ The Kee Klamp scaffolding system used in the *Rover Chair* and other early works (customized beds and cabinets that earned Arad his living in the early years) was modular and flexible, but also imposed its own character on the results. By freeing himself from appropriated materials, Arad would be able to completely define his own sensibility.

⁴ Ron Arad *Talks to Matthew Collings*, p. 58.

⁵ See Charles Jencks and Nathan Silvers, *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2013). The chair on the cover of the book, designed by Silvers when he and Jencks affiliated with the Architectural Association and now in the V&A collection, is an important precedent for Arad's *Puch Stool* and *Rover Chair*.

Arad had made an abortive attempt in this direction when he first set out: his *Transformer* seating (1981). These were made using recent medical technology, originally developed to make stretchers for people with spinal injuries. It consisted of a vinyl bag filled with Styrofoam pellets, which can take the impression of anything (including a body) and then be vacuum-hardened. While the technology did work, it did not produce a satisfactory aesthetic result—Sudjic describes the *Transformers* as “a disturbing image... like a mummified body,” and Arad abandoned it. It was not until 1985, shortly after the *Concrete Stereo*, that he made the key leap to hand-shaped metal. This shift to a more generative mode of making unleashed Arad, inaugurating an equally generative period of creativity. The found object was expunged in favor of this freeform experimentation. This in turn opened up new possibilities with regard to scale. Beginning with his One Off showroom in Neal Street—a collaged cavern-like space made in a sustained campaign of improvisation—Arad re-engaged with his original discipline of architecture. Even in his furniture, he sought out forming techniques that could unfold or extend spatially, escaping the confines of standard joinery or other established construction.

Fishes & Crows concentrates on this second phase of Arad’s career. It can be seen as beginning with the *Cone* and *Horns* chairs. In both cases, he retained the character of flat sheet metal, either curling it round into a taper, or cutting and bending it. The *Cone* series exemplifies Arad’s mobility with regard to scale; it was derived from an enormous cornucopia-like handrail that Arad had been obligated (for health and safety reasons) to add to the stairs at his showroom. He then used the same principle to make glass-topped tables and chairs with cantilevered glass seats, free-standing screens and the impressive *Shadow of Time* (1986), a monumental disjunctive cone form that operates as a projector, casting the shadow image of a working clock against the ceiling. In other projects of this time the logic of sheet construction is still more evident. *Full House (Carpet Chair)*, an installation for Documenta 8 in 1987, features two seats built from flat hinged

panels that can fold back down into the floor; *Well Tempered Chair*, Arad’s first venture into serial production through a collaboration with Vitra, ingeniously combines four sheets of thin steel into a capacious and springy easy chair.

All these works of 1986-87 have an assertive physical presence, but essentially the metal is treated as if it were paper—he was not yet exploiting its malleability. This changed with the breakthrough *Tinker* chairs of 1988, and subsequent works of that year, including *Italian Fish* and the first works in the *Big Easy* series. Now, operating with fairly rudimentary tools—principally, a rubber hammer and a welding torch—Arad searched out his forms as he worked, stretching the metal in all directions: “I’d take a piece of steel and beat it until it admits it’s comfortable.”⁶ The leap from two to three dimensions brought with it an extraordinary explosion of creativity. Though he did work from preparatory drawings (which were quite expressive in their own right and only provided the barest of indications as to contour) there was considerable scope for improvisation within each series. At first, he staged contrasts of surface and color, sometimes highlighting the seams of the chairs by executing them in polished stainless steel. “The welds became the memory of the drawings,” Arad later said. “It’s something you believe in at the time, at least until you discover you can remove the welds.”⁷ As he came to grips with his new techniques, he gradually became dissatisfied with the crudeness of their process-based expressionism and started to finish them in an overall mirror polish. Though this was extremely skill and labor intensive compared to any of his previous work, it achieved a spectacular combination of volumetric curvature and optical dazzle. The only real correlates for this work are, perhaps, the titanium-clad buildings of Frank O. Gehry.

6 Ron Arad *Talks to Matthew Collings*, p. 65.

7 Sudjic, *Ron Arad*, p. 56.

Their idioms developed from a very different structural logic—Arad’s work is more like a punk slam dance, Gehry’s like a ballet—yet both men successfully departed from the orthogonal logic of their disciplines, opening up wholly new formal paradigms.⁸

In retrospect, the gleaming surfaces of works like *Wild Crow* (1990) and *Big Easy 2 for 2* (1989) seem a harbinger of Arad’s steadily increasing production values. The decisive turning point came in 1993, when he relocated manufacture out of his own London studio to a factory owned by Stefano Ronchetti, in the historic furniture production center of Cantú north of Milan; a year later he would begin collaborating on fabrication with Ernest Mourmans, the great Dutch patron of contemporary design. With this support, he was able to be more prolific, and also could take on even larger, more ambitious projects, and experiment with materials like polychromatic resins and Corian. The move repositioned him (both literally and figuratively) closer to Italian designers, who had always relied on the country’s artisanal workforce to realize their ideas. He was now established in the top echelon of design, with all the opportunity and attention that came with that position. Even the great Ettore Sottsass was impressed by Arad’s creations, as is evident from his description of encountering a *Big Easy*: “that immense rusted armchair, strange antique animal, strange fossil, probably from a generation destroyed by some meteorite... [it] was for me a huge shock, almost frightful.”⁹

Just as Arad’s early readymades had introduced existing aesthetic qualities into his objects, his collaboration with Ronchetti similarly incurred dependencies. When any artist or designer outsources production, there is a tradeoff: usually, more

8 Gehry was developing this signature idiom right at this time, for the Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis (completed 1993).

9 Ettore Sottsass, “Leaving the Grotto,” in *Ron Arad: One Off Three* (London: Artemis, 1993), p. 6.

refinement and less urgency. The look and manner of Arad’s furniture changed, the surfaces far more consistent, the contours harder and more defined. Gone was the feeling of blow-by-blow discovery, and the atavistic energy that this had imparted. This tendency was amplified by his use of new technologies. Arad had always been technically adventurous, but in the 1990s and early 2000s innovative processes such as vacuum forming, digital fabrication, and superforming (heat-forcing a metal into a mold) became main events in his work.

Arad’s professional position shifted, as well. The *Well Tempered Chair* was followed up by several further commissions for Vitra, and before long Arad was working with other manufacturers too, including Cassina, Driade, Moroso, and Kartell. His *Bookworm* shelf was an anomalous best-seller, an extension of the thinking behind his “profile” pieces that became a genuinely affordable design classic. He was appointed head of product design at the Royal College of Art in 1997, instituting an influential platform-based structure that aimed toward competitive multiplicity of approaches, and helping to produce a generation of designers who are now among the leaders of the field.¹⁰ He began taking on significant architectural commissions, beginning with the Tel Aviv Opera House (completed 1994) and arguably culminating in the Design Museum Holon, a building with the centripetal energy of an inside-out velodrome (completed 2010). And he received a one-man traveling retrospective starting in 2009 (shown at the Centre Pompidou, Paris and at the Museum of Modern Art, New York). The exhibition title, *No Discipline*, implicitly endorsed the view of Arad as a “one off” in his own right, someone impossible to pin down on any spectrum, disciplinary or otherwise. Now that this enfant terrible of the design scene had come to constitute some kind of center, however, he was also a repeatable model for others to emulate.

10 See Christopher Frayling, “Ron Arad at the Royal College of Art,” in *No Discipline*.

In *Fishes & Crows*, we have the opportunity to return to Arad's crucial breakthrough period, the moment when he was least constrained by external factors—dependent neither on the readymade nor on fabricators. The exhibition could not be better calibrated to the current energies of the design scene, which seem to converge at the junction of intensive craft and inventive form. In such a climate, Arad's work of this period is essential, a fount of energy and immediacy that flows through studios worldwide. Encountering these prescient objects today feels like the opposite of looking into a rear-view mirror. They appear a lot closer to us in time than they actually are.



Ron Arad's One Off studio on Neal Street

WORKS

Puch Stool, 1981

Arad's first furniture designs were a combination of pragmatism and ingenuity. He may have lacked the equipment required to execute traditional furniture, but he also had no interest in doing so. Instead, he drew from the industrial remnants that littered London at the time—the material culture of a struggling British economy. This stool incorporates the seat from a Puch scooter (the Austrian equivalent of an Italian Vespa) atop a simple wire base. The height is adjustable, and the original tilting mechanism is still present. Arad used a very similar approach in his *Rover Chair*, which uses seats from the classic British motor.

Puch Stool, 1981
Chrome-plated steel, vinyl
26 x 16 x 14 inches
66 x 40.6 x 35.6 cm





Bookcases, 1983

One of the first to spot Ron Arad's talent was the avant garde fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier. On Boxing Day of 1981, he had stopped by the One Off shop unannounced, and put in an order for six *Rover* chairs. This interest soon led to a commission for the interior of the London boutique Bazaar, completed in 1983. These three shelving units are survivors of that project. Though built with the Kee Klamp system that Arad had used for the *Rovers*, as well as other bespoke commissions, they are unusual for their roughly bent uprights, which lend the units a herky-jerky energy. (The effect is comparable to the slightly later *Cone* series, whose construction is also anticipated here in the flared feet.) By graduating the depth of the simple plate glass shelves, Arad mimicked the rhythm of a traditional *étagère*, updating the form in rough industrial materials.



Bookcases, 1983

Patinated steel, cast iron steel, glass

88.25 x 56 x 15.75 inches each

224 x 142 x 40 cm each

Unique

Cone Screens, 1985

Arad's first *Cone* form was a stair balustrade, built for his new One Off shop on Neal Street. Like the *Horns* series, it was made by rolling sheet metal over a mandrel and then welding it at the seam. By joining several of these shapes together, Arad could create a herky-jerky sense of movement.

The *Cone Screens* are among several room divider typologies that Arad explored in the mid-1980s. Some of these featured glass panels executed in collaboration with Danny Lane; others, like *Curtain Call* (made in 1987 for documenta 8 Kassel) incorporated honeycomb aluminum, one of Arad's preferred materials at the time. He would later return to the theme of the sculptural screen, using it as a canvas for multimedia projection, in *Curtain Call* at the Roundhouse in London (2011), which toured to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and then to a festival in Singapore under the title of *720 Degrees* (2012, 2016).

Cone Screen, 1985
Mild steel
84.75 x 78.75 x 31.5 inches
215 x 200 x 80 cm
Unique





Cone Screen, 1985
Mild steel
84.75 x 78.75 x 31.5 inches
215 x 200 x 80 cm
Unique





Horns Armchair, 1985

Arad's *Horns* series marked a crucial step for the designer, away from the readymade and into fabrication from scratch. Each object in the series was based on a simple manipulation of flat aluminum sheets, which are joined together with curved lengths of steel tubing. The title refers to sharply pointed triangles that were used as "props" for a dining table and related side chairs. This imposing armchair lacks this aggressive element, but it still exemplifies the tough "post-industrial" look typical of Arad's work at the time. The sides of the chair are cut out and then bent at a ninety-degree angle, to form the arms. The seat and back are made up of 62 horizontally-stretched springs; the curve of their placement is visible in perforations through the sides. The aluminum surface is ground to create a reflective pattern, an allusion to the *Cubi* sculptures of David Smith of the 1960s, whose hard-edged geometric quality the *Horns* series shares.

Horns Armchair, 1985
Aluminum, steel, PVC covered galvanized springs
47.25 x 46 x 47.25 inches
120 x 117 x 120 cm
Unique



Looming Lloyd, 1986

This comical yet pivotal piece features weighted hollow shoes, fitted onto an historic Lusty Lloyd Loom chair—an icon of informal furniture made of twisted and woven paper, which had great popularity in the 1920s and '30s. The shoes are sufficiently heavy to lift the whole chair into the air when it is not in use; a sitter's body weight settles the piece back to earth. The chair only sits when you do, and otherwise rises from the floor into a purely sculptural object.

Looming Lloyd marks a transition away from Arad's early work, which incorporated existing readymades. Though it still does include such a found object, the shoes could in theory be placed on a different existing chair; in this way, Arad's early dependency on the character of the readymade was reversed. The conception and execution of the shoes also anticipates his later "volume" based pieces, in their seamed hollow form and use of counterweighting to control tilt and stance.

Looming Lloyd, 1986
Lloyd Loom chair, stainless steel and patinated steel
36.25 x 41.25 x 25.5 inches
92 x 105 x 65 cm
Unique





Cone Table, 1986 and Deep Table, 1987

Arad's *Cone* tables were highly varied in their realization, some left with a simple metal top, some edged round with a brush-like fringe. Others, like *Deep Table*, are covered with glass. This allowed Arad to turn the tabletop into an arresting optical experience: metal debris, in combination with etching and honeycomb aluminum, that combine in an illusory well of floating images. The conical supports serve only to elevate the pictorial plane.

Other works in the *Cone* series included chairs with cantilevered glass seats, and the projector clock *Shadow of Time* (1986).

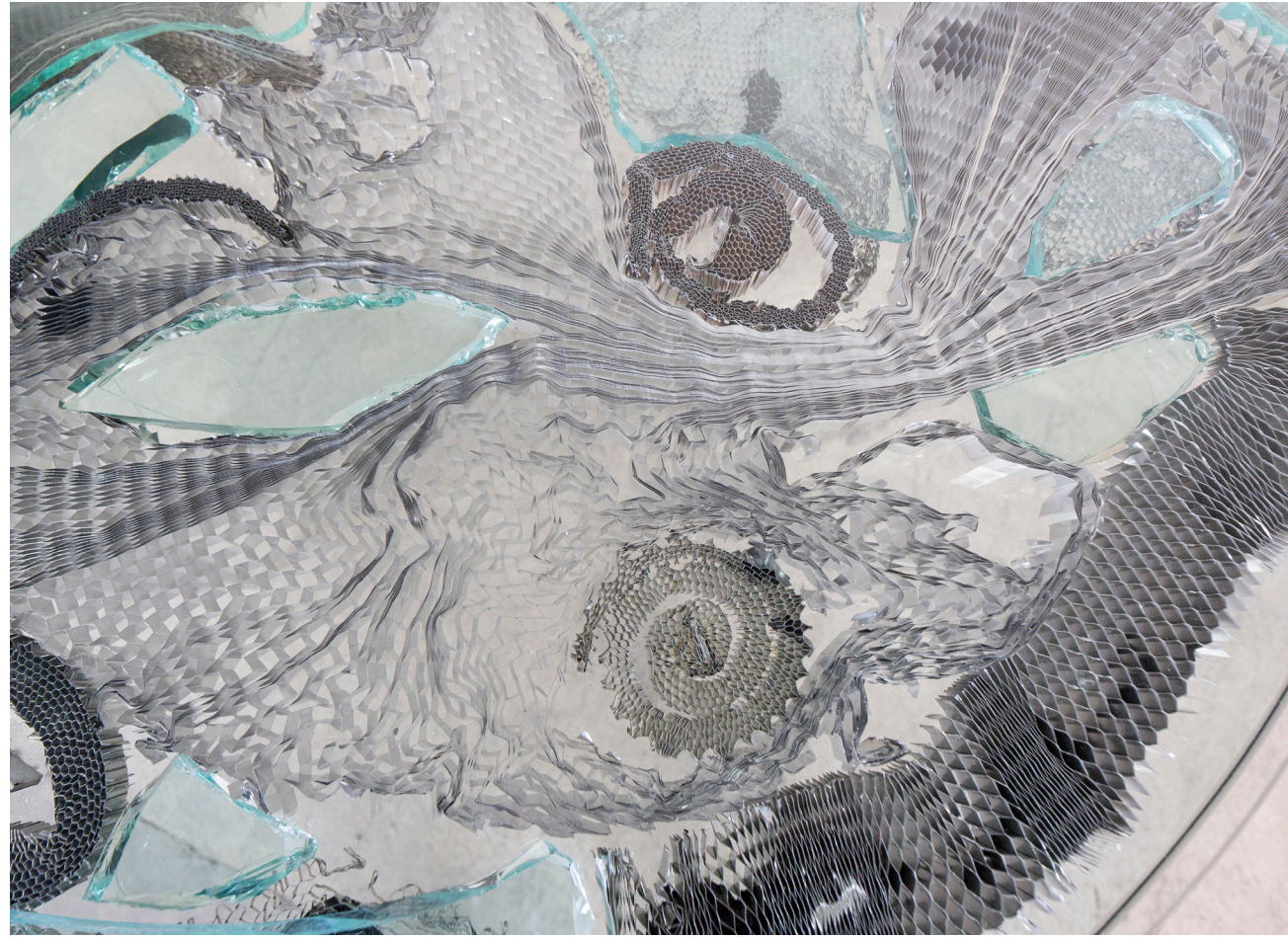
Cone Table, 1986
Patinated mild steel, steel
29.25 x 30 x 30 inches
74.6 x 76.3 x 76.3 cm
Unique





Deep Table, 1987
Glass, honeycomb aluminum and mild steel
30.75 x 48 x 48 inches
78 x 122 x 122 cm
Unique





Tinker Chair, 1988

The *Tinker* chairs mark a decisive shift in Arad's practice toward sculptural metalwork. Using a rubber-headed hammer, he and his team at One Off shaped flat sheets of mild steel into undulating shells. They then welded them together, using stainless steel at the seams. Hammer-marks are left visible, so that one can see (indeed, almost feel and hear) the blows by which the chairs were wrestled into being. The sides are composed of relatively flat sheets, cut to profile in order to fill in the gaps, and are embellished with paint. Where required, as under the front of the seat, the steel is folded into a rough truss that adds structural integrity.

Though its title suggests ad hoc craftsmanship—tinkers, in bygone days, were itinerant artisans who repaired pewter and other household items—these experimental chairs are impressive for the sheer force of will involved in their making. Approximately seven were made, each a totally unique improvisatory composition.

Tinker Chair, 1988
Hammered steel
37.5 x 17.75 x 28.75 inches
94.9 x 45.1 x 73 cm
Unique





Italian Fish, 1989

This work refers to Gaetano Pesce, whom Arad regarded highly during his formative period—it can perhaps be read as an Oedipal gesture of overcoming the older designer’s influence. In addition to its punning title (pesce being the Italian word for fish), it adopts the stance of Pesce’s *Feltri Chair* of 1986, with a squared base flaring into an outspread back. In both works the seat is contained within a cavity and surrounded by a wall—of fabric in Pesce’s design, and steel in Arad’s. In a related work, *Chair by its Cover* (1989) Arad literalized this motif of enclosure: it features an old side chair trapped within the steel envelope.

Later iterations of the *Italian Fish* were manufactured by Ronchetti in Italy, with a higher degree of precision but arguably less vitality than this early version.

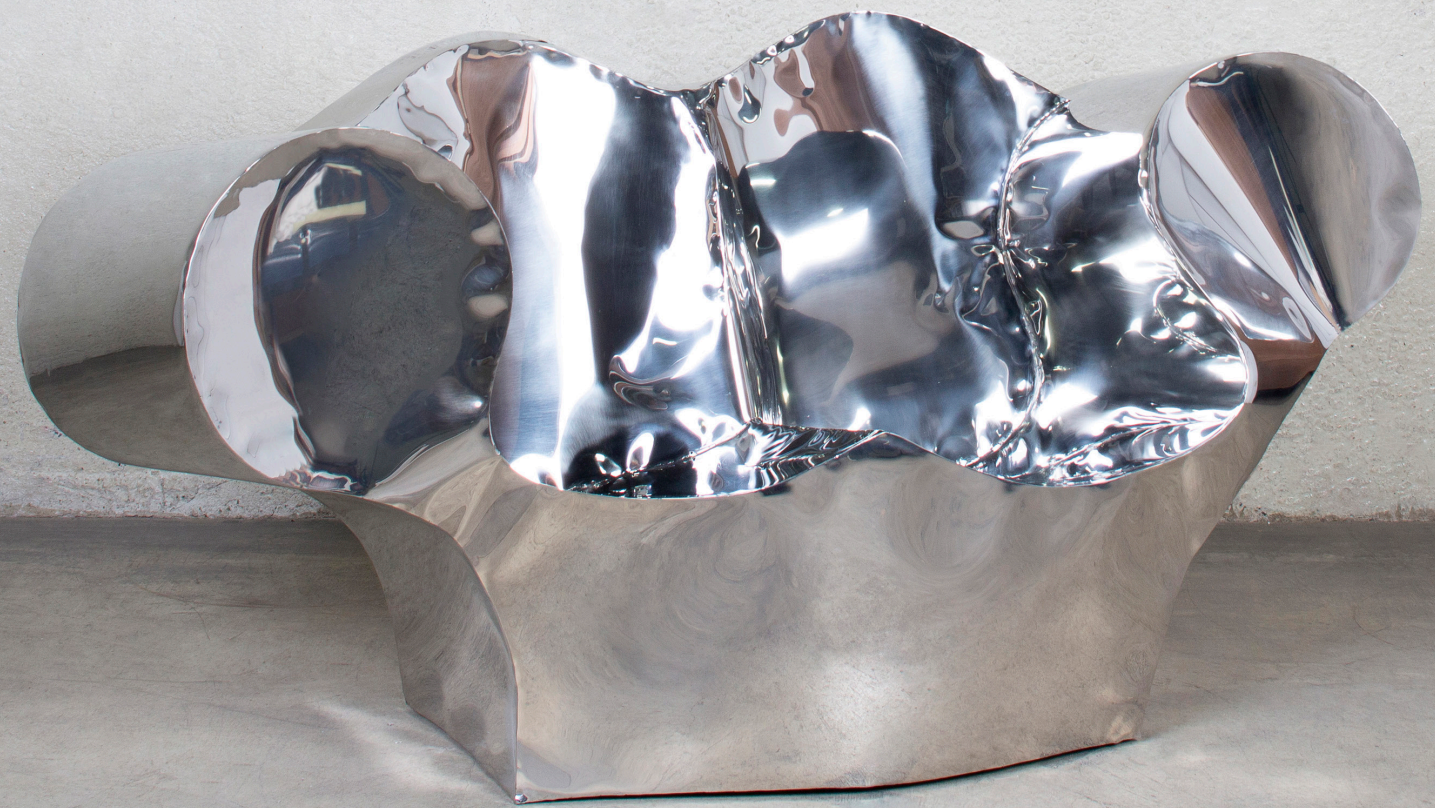
Italian Fish, 1989
Polished and patinated steel
35 x 37.75 x 26.5 inches
89 x 96 x 67.5 cm
Edition of 20





Big Easy Volume 2 for 2, 1989

This extrapolation of Arad's *Big Easy* chairs into a two-seater settee is rendered in highly polished stainless steel. Arad had initially experimented with using this reflective material only at the welds where the shaped panels of the chairs are joined, drawing attention to these seams—an effect he likened to a line drawing. Here though the entire object receives a mirrored finish. This was extremely time-consuming and difficult to achieve (Arad recalled that it became a point of competition among the production team at One Off) but produces an impression of dematerialization, as if the chair were transformed into a purely optical experience.



Big Easy Volume 2 for 2, 1989
Stainless steel
40 x 76 x 36.25 inches
101.6 x 193 x 92.2 cm
Edition of 20



Wild Crow, 1990

Arad has always been concerned with functional typologies, but is no more constrained by them than a pianist is limited by the keyboard. *Wild Crow* exemplifies this: it is a breathtakingly bold re-imagining of a utilitarian form. Described in one of Arad's annotated drawings as a "chaise very longue," *Wild Crow* is weighted at the base, which serves to anchor the form as it unfurls up to the ceiling—like a pair of ribbons, or perhaps wings. The stainless steel surface has been brought to a high mirror polish.

The *Wild Crow* series began in 1988 and was rethought a few times over the succeeding years, an investigation that proceeded in tandem with the more curvilinear *Big Easy and Volume* pieces. A related series of chairs entitled *A.Y.O.R. (At Your Own Risk)*, a single integrated volume rather than the split back of *Wild Crow*, was initiated in 1991.

Wild Crow, 1990
Mirror-polished stainless steel, patinated mild steel
63 x 45 x 27.25 inches
160 x 114.3 x 69.2 cm





Spanish Made, 1990

This counterweighted chair is one of a series, the first of which was made while Arad was at a workshop in Spain. All have the same roughly heart-shaped profile with two curves meeting in a deep split at the center. They can be seen as relating both to Arad's ongoing *Volume* series and his subsequent profile-based pieces, like *Eight by One* (1991). Unusually, *Spanish Made* features text. It reads "the dog barks and the caravan rolls on," a traditional proverb, possibly of Turkish origin, that speaks of the futility of complaint in the face of historical change. In this particular version of the chair, the phrase appears in English on one side, Hebrew on the other—also unusual in alluding to Arad's Israeli origins.

Spanish Made, 1990
Patinated and polished steel with lead weights
51.25 x 35.5 x 35.5 inches
130.2 x 90.2 x 90.2 cm
Edition of 20





The Fiddler, 1990

Among Arad's most recognizable designs, the *Big Easy* chairs are made of hammered sheet steel welded together at the seams. They have the ample proportions of an easy chair (hence the title, which also refers to the historical nickname of New Orleans).

This early version of the chair is named *The Fiddler*, which could imply that it is a pendant to the earlier *Tinker Chair*, but also alludes to the musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*. The oxidized mild steel surface contrasts with the high polish of later versions, as does the "openwork" structure, with interior voids under the seat and arms. This places emphasis on contour, rather than volumetric enclosure. Arad had created a similarly capacious, even more linear seating form in his *Well Tempered Chair* (1987) for Vitra, but unlike that design, or a traditional upholstered chair, the *Big Easy* is obdurate and monumental. It comes across as a sculpture of a chair, rather than something to actually sit in.

The Fiddler, 1990
Mild steel
40 x 48 x 39 inches
101.6 x 121.9 x 99.1 cm
Unique





Eight By One, 1991

These works are at the extreme end of Arad's experimentation with profile forms, in which the furniture's shape is defined entirely by its side contour. Though precedents for this approach do exist within modernism—Marcel Breuer's use of tubular steel, and Gerald Summer's iconic 1934 chair made from a single piece of plywood—it was Arad who brought the idea to its logical conclusion, using only a single curve and a single material. Arad achieved related expressions of the idea in his *Papardelle* chair, *Before Summer*, and *Loop Loop* (all 1992).

Protoype for Eight by One, 1991
Patinated steel
48.5 x 12 x 23.25 inches
123 x 31.5 x 59 cm
Prototype





Eight by One, 1991
Polished steel
54.25 x 25.13 x 34.65 inches
138 x 34 x 88 cm
Edition of 20





Happy Days, 1992

Arad here provides a negative image of furniture, containing a seat within a solidly fabricated steel block. The piece lay as an unrealized sketch for some time before he finally managed to fabricate it, and indeed still seems to have the quality of a line drawing—a trait common to several of Arad's works at this time, which are defined by their view in profile. In the related series, *2 R Not* (1992), he similarly explored the negative space within a block, but these are entirely abstract. *Happy Days*, by contrast, could be viewed as a depiction of a flared skirt beneath a restaurant booth's tabletop.



Happy Days, 1992
Patinated mild steel and mirror-polished stainless steel
31.5 x 51.25 x 29.5 inches
80 x 130 x 75 cm
Unique



Two Legs and a Table, 1994

This monumental table was fabricated not at Ron Arad's own One Off shop, but in the Italian manufactory of Stefano Ronchetti. In its perfection of finish and complex conjoined volumes, it demonstrates the elevation of production values that Arad was able to achieve through this new collaboration. The curvilinear plan of the piece is reminiscent of the large bar that Arad designed for Spazio Metals in Milan in 1992, his first collaboration with Ronchetti. By giving the form massive elephantine supports, he was able to create a most unusual table—held up on only two legs. Objects like these mark a decisive conclusion to Arad's early oeuvre, which began with ad hoc readymades and ended in feats of prodigious physicality.

Two Legs and a Table, 1994
Patinated and polished steel
28 x 105.25 x 41.25 inches
71 x 267 x 105 cm
Edition of 20







RON ARAD

Present	Lives and works in London, England
2010	Architect, Design Museum Holon, Holon, Israel
2004	Begins designing Magis' headquarters in Treviso, Italy and the Holon Design Museum in Holon, Tel Aviv, Israel
2003	Works on projects including the Maserati headquarters showroom in Modena, Italy and Y's fashion store for Yohji Yamamoto in Tokyo, Japan
1998	Introduces Design Products MA course at the Royal College of Art, London, England
1997	Begins tenure of teaching product design at Royal College of Art, London, England
1994	Designs the foyer and bookstore for the New Tel-Aviv Opera House, Tel Aviv, Israel
1981	Establishes One Off Ltd. in Covent Garden, London, England
1974-79	Architectural Association - School of Architecture, studies under Peter Cook and Bernard Tschumi
1971-73	Jerusalem Academy of Art
1951	Born in Tel Aviv, Israel

Select Public Collections

Centre National d'Art Plastique, Paris, France	The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Design Museum, London, England	Triennale, Milan, Italy
Design Museum, Nürnberg, Germany	Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
Design Museum, Osaka, Japan	Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Design Museum, Ghent, Belgium	Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Detroit Institute of the Arts, Detroit, MI	
Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France	
Ghent Museum, Ghent, Belgium	
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia	
Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, Germany	
Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, England	
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY	
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Montreal, Canada	
Musée des Beaux Arts, Montreal, Canada	
Musée National d'Art Moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France	
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France	
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY	
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA	
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX	
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY	
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO	
Neue Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany	
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA	
Powerhouse, Sydney, Australia	
Rohsska Design Museum, Gothenburg, Sweden	
Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art, Amsterdam, Netherlands	
St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO	

Select Public Exhibitions

2018 *Ron Arad: Yes to the Uncommon!*, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany

2017 *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, England
Ron Arad: Beautiful Useful Love, Grob Gallery, Genève, Switzerland

2016 *Curtain Call*, Roundhouse, London, England
Ron Arad: Spyre, Royal Academy of Arts, London, England

2013-14 *Inaugural Show: Looking Back*, The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH
Ron Arad: In Reverse, Design Museum Holon, Holon, Israel; Pinacoteca Giovannie Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italy
Bangles to Benches: Contemporary Jewelry and Design, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA

2011-12 *720 Degrees*, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970-1990, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

2011 *Ron Arad's Curtain Call*, Roundhouse, London, England

2010 *European Design Since 1985. Shaping the New Century*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Restless, Barbican Centre, London, England

2009 *Ron Arad: No Discipline*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
European Design Since 1985, Shaping the New Century, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN

2008 *Ron Arad: No Discipline*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

2007 *Designing Modern Britain*, Design Museum, London, England

2005 *Volumes and Voids*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Indianapolis, IN

2000 *Before and After Now*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

1998 R.T.W. Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, Scotland

1997 *Ron Arad: New Acquisitions*, Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts, Montreal, Canada
Ron Arad, The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia
Designed for Delight, Alternative aspects of twentieth-century decorative arts, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec, Canada; Cincinnati Art Museum,

Cincinnati, OH; Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Musee des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, Krakow, Poland; Die Neue Sammlung, Munich, Germany; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KN; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA

1995 *Ron Arad*, Gazi, Athens, Greece
The Work of Ron Arad, Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki, Finland
Ron Arad and Ingo Maurer, Triennale, Milan, Italy

1994 *L'Esprit du Nomade*, Cartier Fondation, Paris, France

1993 *Design in the 20th Century*, Grand Palais, Paris, France
One Off and Short Runs, Centre for Contemporary Arts: Warsaw, Krakow, Poland

1991 *A Break with Tradition*, Rohska Museum, Gothenburg, Sweden

1990-95 *Sticks and Stones, One Offs and Short Runs*, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany

1990 *Ron Arad Recent Works*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel

1987 *Nouvelles Tendances*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Awards

- 2017 Winner of the UK National Holocaust Memorial Design Competition
- 2013 Elected to Royal Academy of Arts, London, England
- 2007 Contemporary Art Prize, presented by the French Friends of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Paris France
- 2006 The Jerusalem Prize for Arts and Letters, Awarded by Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Israel
- 2005 Designer of the Year Award, *FX magazine*
- 2004 Designer of the Year Award, Architektur & Wohnen
- 2002 Finalist for the 2002 World Technology Award for Design
Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) in recognition of his 'sustained excellence in aesthetic and efficient design for industry'
Fellow of the World Technology Network
- 2001 Oribe Art & Design Award, Japan
Gio Ponti International Design Award. Denver, CO
Barcelona Primavera International Award for Design, Barcelona, Spain
Perrier Jouët Selfridges Design Prize, Co-winner. London, England
- 1999 Design Plus Award, Frankfurt, Germany
Internationaler Designpreis, Baden-Württemberg Design Center, Stuttgart, Germany
- 1994 Designer of the Year, Salon du Meuble, Paris, France

RON ARAD

FISHES & CROWS 1985-1994

Design: Olivia Swider

Photography by: Paul Denton, Timothy Doyon, Dan Kukla and Bill Orcutt.

Published by

Friedman Benda

515 West 26th Street

New York, NY 10001

Tel. + 1 212 239 8700

www.friedmanbenda.com

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Produced on the occasion of the exhibition, *Fishes & Crows 1985-1994*, June 21 - July 27, 2018.