

PORTFOLIO

Cutting Edge

Wells Mason

The Umasi Collection reimagines the familiar.

Umasi, a collection of work by artist Wells Mason, blurs the line between sculpture and furniture, with man-made materials such as stainless steel and tempered glass colliding with organic (exquisitely finished woods) and even obviously salvaged materials (a telephone pole, recycled rubber, bicycle parts). You could say Mason's oeuvre grapples with modernism versus tradition, with rampant consumerism versus sustainability, with strict functionality of craft versus design with a message—and you'd be right on all three counts. "I wanted a body of work that allowed me to explore without constraints, without having to be concerned with 'Does this piece go with that sofa?'" says the self-taught Mason, a University of Texas graduate whose workshop is in Coupland, about 30 miles east of Austin. "The idea is to cause people to think about things differently." —LOFFANE CADEMARTORI

\$1,500-\$5,500. 512-466-9577, ironwoodindustries.com

Wells Mason's chairs, benches, and tables are simultaneously playful and—with their stark joining of organic and man-made materials (such as the Baltic birch, stainless steel, and fiberboard embedded in a telephone pole in the Shelf Life chair, bottom right)—aesthetically and intellectually challenging.

