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DESIGN ARCHITECTURE DECORATIVE ARTS



# Art + Craft = Design

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL STARTED OUT AS A PAINTER AND DRAFTSMAN but when his wife decided to take a ceramics class he became intrigued by the idea of making objects instead of images. "Once I got started I just never stopped—all of my work is to some degree driven by a simple desire to possess something, to spend time with something, to look at something," he says.

This past spring the **Julie Saul Gallery** in New York exhibited Russell's *After the Golden Age*, a ceramic still life comprising multiple elements, including fruit bowls, birds, and obelisks, that is replete with historical references culled from days wandering through museums, taking in prints, paintings, and decorative objects of all sorts. Russell cast every mold himself and perfected the glaze to mimic stone.

He's also recently started to experiment with bronze for a commission he's completing for the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Arts for Transit program, which was launched in the 1980s to oversee the installation of permanent artworks in New York City subway stations. For the Ninth Avenue station in Brooklyn he designed cast-bronze ornamental gates and finials in the shape of magnified bee-covered honeycombs and flowers, a motif carried over from earlier work in ceramics. The gates (scheduled to be installed this June) were assembled in Queens at the Modern Art Foundry, a family-operated bronze workshop using the lost wax casting technique, the same foundry where Louise Bourgeois's legendary spiders were created.

—Danielle Devine

THE DUTCH ARTIST HANS VAN BENTEM is best known for his crystal chandeliers. But don't call them rarified. Shaped into skulls, revolvers, and airplanes, his twinkling creations are more punk rock than formal decor. This summer, at the **Gemeentemuseum** in The Hague, the artist gets another chance to pit



his iconoclastic sensibility against traditional design. In an exhibition titled *Keep on Dreaming*, open June 1 through November 11, the artist will erect six installations inside the museum's most celebrated period rooms, which have remained unchanged since they first opened in 1935. Expect everything from crystal canopy beds to fantastical porcelain robots to creepy, clownish sculptures produced in collaboration with Senegalese artists. And all of it framed by opulent moldings, scenic wallpapers, and Japanese lacquer that speak to a bygone era of Dutch design. [gemeentemuseum.nl](http://gemeentemuseum.nl).

—Damaris Colhoun

Christopher Russell's cast-bronze honeycomb and bees, part of his ornament for the Ninth Avenue subway station in Brooklyn.

Hans van Bentem's installations run the gamut from whimsical to provocative.

