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The 5 Best-Designed Items of October

A gym shoe for gadget lovers, a chic guide to New York City and the new must-have timepiece: WSJ. Magazine editors round up five new design items they're most excited about.



Pratt Chair, 1984, by Gaetano Pesce

Since the late 1960s, when he was part of Italy's Radical Design movement, Gaetano Pesce has sought to jettison modernism's order and functionalism in favor of more imaginative design, creating sculptural furnishings that embrace imperfection and emotion. "All the living designers I work with today, to a varying degree, carry his DNA," says Marc Benda, a founding partner in the New York gallery Friedman Benda. "Pesce's influence informs the notion that design can convey feeling, sorrow, angst [and] describe the human condition." This month, Friedman Benda is staging *Age of Contaminations*, a show of around three dozen pieces by the still-active designer, who turns 80 in November. Made between 1968 and 1992, the works include rarely seen private commissions, like a 20-foot-long polyurethane bookcase with raw, jagged edges Pesce created for a professor. There are also unique examples of Pesce's polyurethane Pratt chairs and his first Golgotha table, a tour de force in black-and-blood-red resin referencing the passion of Christ and the '70s oil crisis. The majority of the works are for sale, though Benda is still debating the table. "It's an institutional piece," he says. "It needs to be accessible to posterity." friedmanbenda.com. —Stephen Wallis