

Wintercheck Factory's Inventive Take on Furniture

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Each chair and bench in the new Absolute Beige furniture line by Brooklyn studio Wintercheck Factory employs an unlikely material: slabs of industrial rubber.

Every May during [NYCxDesign](#), dozens of small-batch furniture and lighting studios – mostly from Brooklyn – roll out their latest experimentations to gauge the response from potential clients, manufacturers and future customers. The quality range is wide, from newly minted grad students presenting variations on their thesis projects to boutique firms with well-developed retail distribution networks.

[Wintercheck Factory](#), run by Kristen Wentreck and Andrew Zebulon Williams, is one of the established studios that started out in 2009 making accessories. They have since gone on to produce lighting and furniture crafted from such off-the-shelf materials as wire-glass, planks of knotty pine and screw-in hooks you find at dollar stores.

At SightUnseen Offsite this spring, they presented a line of box-shaped chairs and benches made of flesh-toned Corian, and with seats cut from slabs of industrial rubber. Called Absolute Beige, the pieces stood out as playful explorations in stripping furniture back to its most basic forms, and yet still finding a way to make them look fresh and new; the rubber looked like a thick coating of crystallized sugar or honey, and the Corian read as particle board.

They also seemed more art than furniture and, according to Wentreck, garnered many comparisons to the sculptures of Donald Judd throughout the week. “It was interesting to watch people interact with them,” she says. “So many people thought it was resin or plastic. And they were surprised once they felt how pliable it was.”

The rubber is a polyurethane, which the designers discovered while looking at medical latex as a potential material to explore. When they found it, they were immediately drawn to it. “It’s usually used to make moulds for casting machine parts and gaskets. We liked its amber hue and texture.” For another series, 400 Collection, the designers paired the rubber with southern yellow pine, to create similarly boxy chairs, side tables and a floor lamp where the rubber surrounds a fluorescent tube that when switched on makes the rubber glow a warm red.

They plan to keep finding new ways to exploit the material. “One of its best traits,” says Wentreck, “is that it’s extremely resilient. To clean it, soap and water will do the trick.”