

Mette Bentzen and Lasse Kristensen

When Mette Bentzen and Lasse Kristensen opened their workshop in Elsinore, Denmark, in 2011, their ambition was to make “the best of the best” freestanding furniture. The company’s early work was purely functional and designed in the Danish modern vein, which was only natural, since they had both trained and worked for years at Copenhagen’s P. P. Mobler, the shop renowned for building the most challenging of Hans Wegner’s iconic chairs.

But several years into their new venture, on a visit to Art Basel/Miami, the pair saw a flamboyantly expressive table by Joseph Walsh of Ireland, and the experience shook something loose in them. The next table they designed (top right), with its arched and branching legs, was a turning point for them, a bridge from conventional furniture to something more sculptural.

They soon were building stack-laminated pieces and carving them in shapes depicting or interpreting forms from nature: melting glaciers, icicles, and stalagmites, the face of the moon. “Working this way,” Bentzen says, “set our work free from mid-century Danish design.” The carving, Kristensen says, which is accomplished with angle grinders, files and rasps, and countless hours of hand-sanding with custom sanding blocks, “is inspired by the raw beauty of nature but also lets us express the grain of the wood. We strive for you first to see the shape alone; then when you get closer, you say, ‘Oh, it’s wood!’ and enjoy that.”



Ideas from above. Long devoted to expressing closely observed melting ice forms in their sculpted furniture, Danish makers—and avid hikers—Bentzen and Kristensen recently bought a house in far northern Sweden for simpler access to glacial terrain. Another recent purchase, a telescope, keys into their ongoing series of wall sculptures lit from within that depict the moon behind a scrim of clouds.

