

Lighting that Seems to Float Like Clouds

Designer Ayala Serfaty's latest museum-worthy lighting pieces are firmly rooted in sculpture.

BY ANGELA M.H. SCHUSTER ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2018



Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Among the stunning works collectors of [important design](#) will encounter at the [Salon Art+Design](#) in New York later this fall is a suite of ethereal [lighting fixtures by Ayala Serfaty](#). They will be presented by gallerist Benoist Drut of the New York [design](#) destination [Maison Gerard](#). Drut likens the luminous creations to clouds; others see them as sculptures. We recently caught up with the [Tel Aviv](#)-based Serfaty to talk about her elaborate [design](#) process.

“For me, everything is about sculpture first and foremost, then [about craft](#), and then lastly, it’s about the actual product. And it is a very organic process,” says Serfaty. Her meticulously crafted commissions are not in great supply. Each piece takes up to six months to make from conceptualization to completion. After sketching out a design, she will make a mock-up of it—a massing model of sorts—in paper. Once she settles on the overall shape, she begins to build its delicate armature—an intricate web of glass, which she says plays its own role in determining the fixture’s final form. Next, the lattice-like creation is covered in layers of airbrushed polymer, which shrink to the structure and obscure the web of glass and [lighting](#) elements within.



Ayala Serfaty's luminous Duet II

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

The process results in a fixture that is evocative of a cloud or, more accurately, a crystalline cave formation. Her Soma collection was inspired by a Greek term that describes the human body, and she chose the name to enlighten each work's poetic qualities. "My aim in my Soma series is to make unique, abstract forms that represent a balance between design and coincidence and which are open to multiple interpretations," she says.

Serfaty's light works have earned placement in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Mint Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Corning Museum of Glass, among others. One or more of them can now be yours starting at \$50,000.



The designer's felt-cloaked "Stella (White and Brown)" furniture

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Maison Gerard is also offering a selection of Serfaty's custom furniture—stools, chairs, and settees—which, like her [lighting](#), have rigid unseen internal structures. The forms are covered in handmade felt crafted from fibers gathered from all over the world. "What unites all of my works," says Serfaty, "is their inherent organic qualities that defuse the line between the natural and the abstract."