

# RISDxyz

Rhode Island School of Design's **NEW** alumni magazine  
**SPRING 2010**





**Kevin Cunningham**  
BArch 05

**Artful Ride**

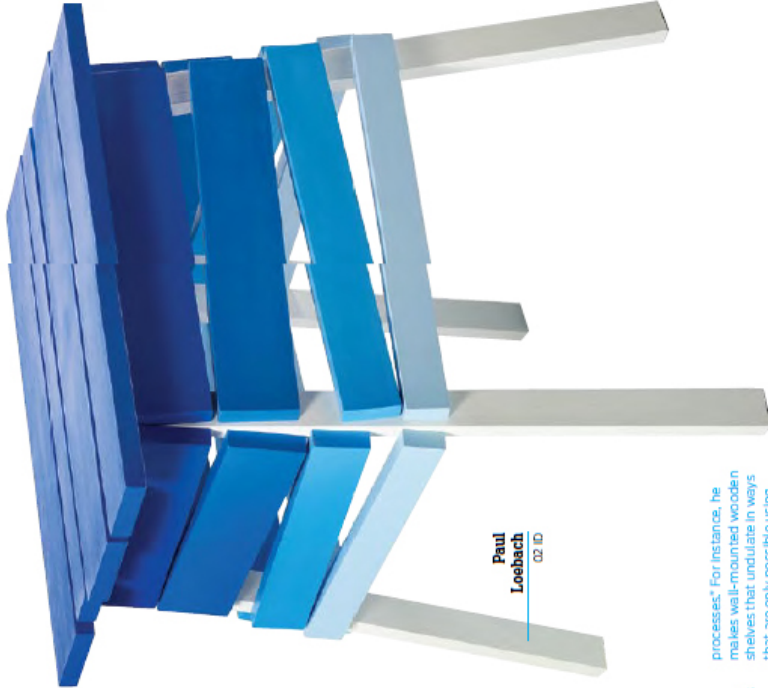
Combining his love of surfing with structural know-how, **Kevin Cunningham** BArch 05 makes durable wooden surfboards as lightweight as the toxic polyurethane foam boards now dominating the market. His current obsession started at RISD, where he built his first prototype. A \$10,000 loan from the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation enabled him to expand his start-up this year. Called *Splaire* (as in the Latin word for "breathe"), the company's name captures both the spirit of surfing and its approach to making green boards. [splairesurfboards.com](http://splairesurfboards.com)

**Martha Davis**  
BS 5C



**Sculptural Footwear**

"Shoes are just little products or architecture for the feet," says **Martha Davis** BS 5C, who first attracted attention for her design of *Diapok*, the Ortho birth control dispenser. Shoes "have to be comfortable and support your weight," but ideally they're also sculptural and beautiful, says the San Francisco-based designer. After selling her first company to Razorfish and working with the firm until the tech bubble burst, Davis launched her eponymous line of shoes and boots in 2008. She admits it was an industry she knew "nothing about," yet in its first two years her line has taken off in Europe, Asia and the U.S. [martha-davis.com](http://martha-davis.com)



**Paul Loebach**  
02 ID

processes." For instance, he makes wall-mounted wooden shelves that undulate in ways that are only possible using CAD programs and advanced machinery. But, while he admits that technology can be very liberating, Loebach reminded *T*'s reporter that design devoid of the human element he so naturally brings to his own work will "fall the best of time." [paulloebach.com](http://paulloebach.com)



**Grain**  
07 ID

**NEW OLD-SCHOOL**

Made of solid maple, the graduated hues and refreshing feel of *Gradient Table* (21 x 18 x 22") by **Paul Loebach** 02 ID is a prime example of why *The New York Times*' style magazine recently chose him for *T*'s *Nifty 50* list of up-and-coming American designers. "Loebach's simultaneous embrace of technology and craft—as well as of thinking and making—is evident in his designs," *The Times* wrote. "Firmly grounded in old-school woodworking techniques, the Brooklyn-based (designer) is also well-versed in the latest design and manufacturing technology, and revisits traditional forms with advanced



**Guatemalan Good(s)**

A new line of solid purses from the design collective *Grain* is among the company's newest sustainable products. Each one is unique and made by "upcycling" pieces of vintage Guatemalan blouses woven on backstrap looms. By turning the fabric inside out, *Grain* "creates an explosion of texture and color that exposes the complex hand work that went into these amazing textiles," notes **Chelsea Green** MD 07. A few years ago, she and fellow *Grain* designers **Britt Kleiman** 07 ID and **James Molo** 07 ID took an eye-opening Winterson course in Guatemala led by designer **Mimi Robinson** BI Pr, who helps artisans in developing countries to market their products abroad. This year *Grain* (which also includes designer **Sami Nerenberg** 07 ID) reconnected with the artisans they met as students to bring two Guatemalan-based products to market: these solid purses and a series of textile necklaces called *Chi-Chi*. [graindesign.com](http://graindesign.com)



**Michael Maltzan**  
BArch 05

**Skid Row Revisited**

LA-based architect **Michael Maltzan** BArch 05 is attracting deserved attention for his latest design for the Skid Row Housing Trust. Built next to an LA freeway, the sculpting white stucco *New Carver* Apartments complex is setting a refreshingly high standard for low-income housing. "Mr. Maltzan may be the only American architect of his stature with significant experience in [the less] glamorous field [of] providing shelter," for his city's poor," noted *The New York Times* in a recent article. **Mike Amdtzer**, [maltzan.com](http://maltzan.com)

AND THERE'S  
**MORE**

**Jonathan Aronson** 09 BS  
Glass Box 09 BS  
The 2009 RISD workbook designed by Aronson and Kim is included in *HOW* magazine's 2009 International Design Annual. Created as their senior thesis project, the book is actually "two yearbooks split into 10-hour segments—day and night—playing out a RISD reality that's 'air in transit.'"

**Allison Berger** 07 BS  
Based in LA, Allison Berger Glassworks produces everything from elegant, hand-blown hanging lamps to thick, cast-glass furniture and large-scale public installations. But regardless of scale, she manages to capture the spiritual nature of light in her pieces, which are represented nationwide by *Vitaly Hult* and by *Plug Lighting* in LA.

**James Capogreco** 02 L  
In North James Carpenter Design Associates accepted the MLLUM and V&LUX Foundation's Daylight and Building Component Award (for 100,000 Euros) for innovative use of glass in architecture.

**Louisa Biggs** 10 D  
Looking for an early look into the "funky yet great looking glass boxes" *Loak Righe* developed in a workshop for the studio at RISD. By taking household items, she creates plastic bags that have over time, she created a chair, with great material perfect for keeping your stuff dry.

**Stephanie Ward** BS AP  
Suddenly wedding "sart look" to her to when the bride was a young boy at Park Rock Bridge designed by Stephanie Ward, who's based in Washington, DC. Her simple, classic silhouettes focus on the details, giving brides a comfortable, open-forward option to make the day memorable—and worthy of all those photos.