

Their designs are comfortable, hip and beautiful and their work is garnering recognition and praise worldwide. ISRAEL21c focuses on seven of the country's top industrial designers.

Combining art and aesthetics with function and purpose, industrial designers can make our lives more comfortable, hip, beautiful and eco-aware.

Israel can boast its own Philippe Starck. The only democracy in the Middle East is also the birthplace of another world-famous designer - UK-based Ron Arad.

After designing for famous studios in Europe, Arad opened a studio in London, where he also teaches at the Royal College of Art. And in Israel, Arad recently designed the international [Design Museum Holon](#), soon to make its debut.

ISRAEL21c brings you seven of our favorite Israeli designers of whom you should also be aware:

Arik Levy

Based in France, you might find yourself looking at your own reflection in one of [Arik Levy's](#) enormous and highly polished metallic 'gem' seats in a hidden Paris garden. "Design is an uncontrolled muscle," says Levy, a self-described technician, artist, photographer and filmmaker. Best known for his industrial furniture design for global companies and installations, Levy works out of Paris, where he commands a 20-person team. They work on the less glitzy side of the business as well, designing packaging, signs and exhibitions.



Shay Alkalay and Yael Mer

[Shay Alkalay and Yael Mer](#), a design duo from Israel, now live in London where they run Raw Edges Design Studio. Partners in both work and life, photographs of the two in design magazines would make you think that all they do is play all day. Tutored under Ron Arad at the Royal College of Art, the off-the-wall pair is known for its playful non-commercial products like the Evacuation Skirt (in case global warming flooding occurs and you need an inflatable canoe) and Sticky Stains for hiding those nasty mustard stains on white shirts. Featured in serious design

exhibits and shops for their gravity-challenging furniture that also tests the limits of material, these two young ones clearly have a long career ahead.



Shahar Peleg

Designing commercial products in small quantities, [Shahar Peleg](#) creates trinkets for everyday life, making hanging your keys or placing your purse on the table just a little more interesting. His products are sold in design stores in Israel, Europe and the US where he is loved for his experimentation with optical illusions - a mixture of design and "magic" that compels you to take a closer look. His chain-link wine rack is a hot item.



Ayala Serfaty

[Ayala Serfaty](#) of Aqua Creations makes lamps of monumental proportions. Using large swathes of fabric, plastics and glass, she creates her signature look: Organic lamps and lampshades that seem to have been swept in from the sea. She designs furniture, too. You'll find her work in museums in New York and Paris and hotel lobbies around the world. Serfaty sets the right mood for a nightcap.



Ototo

[Ototo](#), the design duo Ori Saidi and Daniel Gassner, like to test the limits of everyday objects. A famous fruit bowl of theirs can be described as a place "where iron meets origami." They have a signature piece, a doggy bank made to look like metallic balloons, and a vase made from stacked teacups. It's perfect for tea with the Mad Hatter.



Gadi Amit

[Gadi Amit](#) of NewDealDesign crafted one of Israel's most popular water coolers. In the big world of computers he has designed computer casings - some sustainable - for several of the biggest names in the industry. Based in California, Amit has been busy designing the charge points for Israel's new electric car stations, so that people will be able to charge their battery cars in style. But you don't have to buy a bamboo PC, or wait to buy an electric car to see his work. Find his designs at the Chicago Athenaeum, the Cooper Hewitt-National Design Museum and at San Francisco's MOMA.



Efrat Gommeh

Featured on design-o-phile sites like DesignBoom, [Efrat Gommeh](#), is more than a little playful. In response to a need to reduce packaging in the design industry, she's developed a package for candles that transforms into candleholders. Her Lock-Cup is a favorite among office workers. Each one includes a personal key, without which the coffee cup won't hold any liquid. This way, only you and you alone can use your coffee cup at break-time.



(Research credit for this story goes to Ziva Haller-Rubenstein of the [DesignistDream.com](#) blog)

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