

## On Good Design

Scholar, writer, collector and advisor **Daniella Ohad** has transformed an appreciation for good design into a way of life—and she's eager to share her philosophy.

BY ALINA COHEN



Daniella Ohad; designer Maria Pergay's *Pouf Vague / Wave bench*, 1968



**Daniella Ohad brings an academic** approach to the collectible design market. The graduate of Bard University's Ph.D. program in Decorative Arts, Design and Culture has established a one-of-a-kind course, *Collecting Design*, for the Continuing Education program at the Upper East Side's New York School of Interior Design (NYSID). Ohad's course attracts interior designers and architects, and many art collectors also seek her perspective on enriching the functional objects—not just the paintings and sculptures—that surround them each day into a complete interior space.

*Collecting Design: History, Collections & Highlights* offers an experiential and multifaceted understanding of the design market; last December, Ohad took her students to *Salon Art + Design* and to Sotheby's, where the *Important Design* auction was on view. Diversifying the voices in her classroom, Ohad invited working experts such as James Zemaitis (curator at R & Company) and Steven Learner (founder of *Collective Design fair*) to speak on topics ranging from plywood to ceramics, Italian Radical Design to contemporary practice.

Born in Israel, Ohad admired good design early on. A progressive taste was also in her genes. Her grandmother had a "rare eye" and "lived with Biedermeier furniture when everybody else threw it away," Ohad

explains, referring to the 19th century German furniture. "So I knew how to appreciate living with good things and with beautiful objects." In 1985, she moved to New York and, shortly after, met woodworker and architect George Nakashima. "This is when my world changed," she says. "Living this way is what I want for myself and this is something I convey to my students." Ohad also maintains her own collection, which spans 1900s German pieces to 1970s Pop objects and contemporary design.

"Daniella came to me and to the president about seven years ago and proposed that we offer a program focused solely on Modern design," recalls NYSID's Dean, Dr. Ellen Fisher, about the course's genesis. "It seemed like a natural fit to work with her. We knew that she was someone the school should be affiliated with." Ohad's academic and advisory background particularly appealed. According to Fisher, "Daniella knows everybody." She's able to bring renowned experts to the intimate seminar setting.

Next semester, Ohad will welcome an entirely new panel of specialists, including Suzanne Demisch, co-founder of New York's *Demisch Danant*, design curator Donald Albrecht, auction house founder Richard Wright and Hostler Burrows's Kim Hostler, who will speak about Nordic furniture.