



# Ahead of the Curve

Merging technological acumen and a knowledge of the decorative arts, Paul Loebach creates furniture that could only exist in the 21st century

When searching for inspiration, New York–based furniture designer Paul Loebach casts a wide net. In his cramped Brooklyn studio, where workbenches and computers compete for space with models of chairs made of foam, two bookcases are stuffed with books on furniture-making—not only about the work of modern masters like Gio Ponti and George Nakashima, but about classic styles, from Queen Anne to American Windsor. “I’m mostly inspired by furniture from the 1600s to the 1800s,” Loebach says. “It really moves me.” Such respect for the past might sound surprising, considering that Loebach is a rising star of contemporary American design; his mastery of digital manufacturing techniques puts him squarely on the cutting edge.

When Loebach was a child growing up in Cincinnati, mealtime conversations frequently revolved around craftsmanship and manufacturing. His father, descended from a long line of German woodworkers, was an engineer who specialized in molded plastics. “We’d sit there over dinner and he’d analyze a plastic fork,” Loebach recalls. “It would drive my mom crazy.” Loebach’s father constructed most of the furniture for the house by hand, often with help from his son. ▷

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Paul Loebach in his Brooklyn studio with his Fuga chair. The Watson table, named for James Watson, the scientist who discovered DNA. The Himmeli floor lamp, modeled after traditional Finnish Christmas ornaments.

