

A DESIGN LOVER'S LISTICLE: R&COMPANY'S NINE FAVORITE SHOWS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

By [PIN-UP](#)

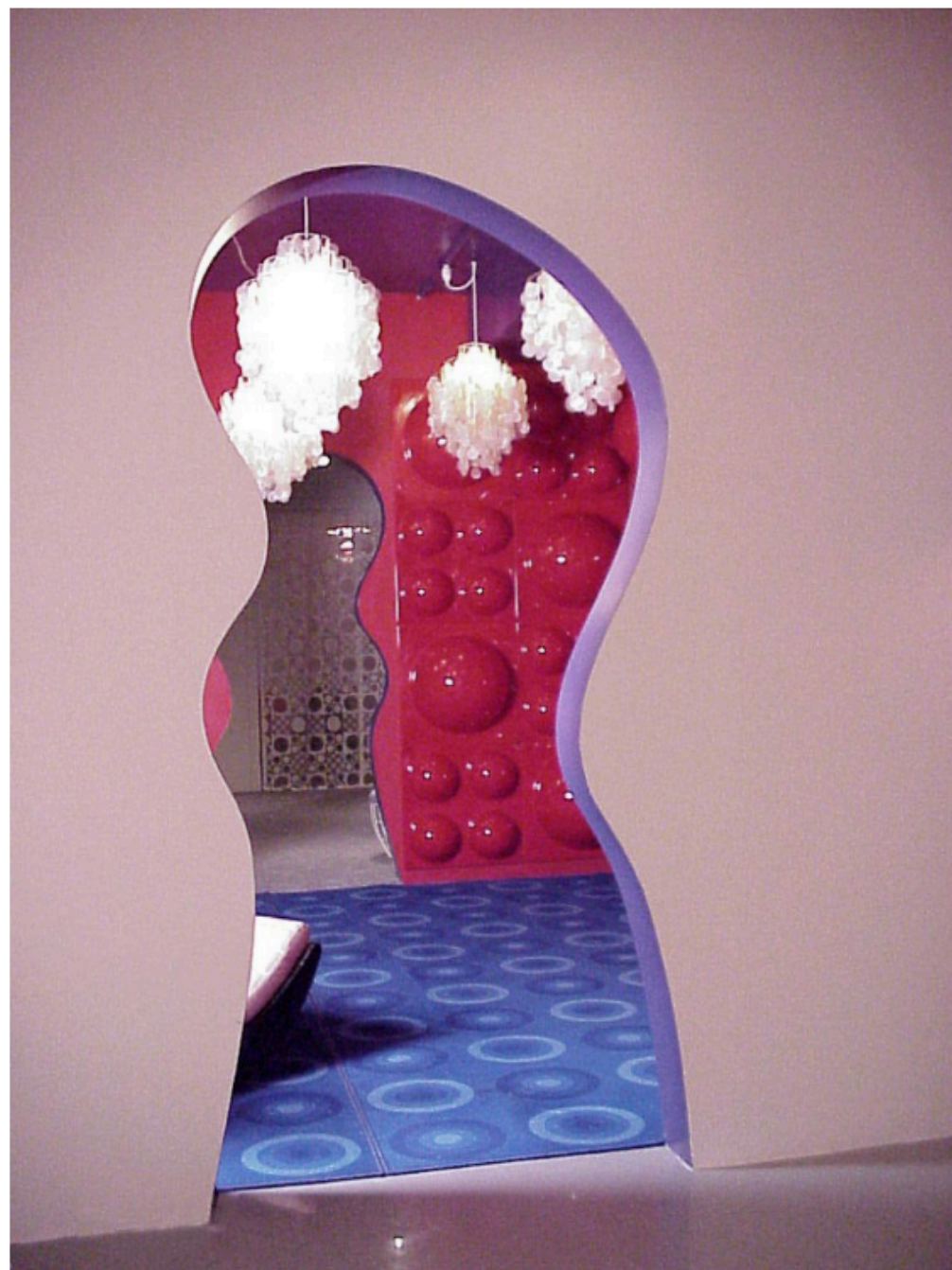


Exhibition view of *The Haas Brothers: King Dong Come* (November 15, 2016 – January 5, 2017). Photo by Joe Kramm.

<https://pinupmagazine.org/articles/a-design-listicle-r-companys-nine-favorite-shows-of-the-past-20-years#12>

Twenty years ago — in Brooklyn's then little-known Williamsburg neighborhood — Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman opened their first gallery. Called R 20th Century, it was born out of the two friends and former performance artists' passion for collecting 20th-century design. What started as a side project with mostly vintage finds quickly grew into one of the most respected collectible design galleries in the world, representing a significant roster of contemporary artists and designers such as [Katie Stout](#), [Jeff Zimmerman](#), and the Haas Brothers. The gallery has continuously adapted over the years, marked by a move to Tribeca in 2001 and an important name change in 2014 (to [R & Company](#)), reflecting an evolving focus on contemporary production. This year marks yet another milestone in R & Company's history, as Meyers and Snyderman have recently moved the majority of their operation into an even bigger space on White Street, one block north from the previous location. Designed by architect [Kulapat Yantrasast](#), the new 8,000-square-foot, triple-story space currently showcases *20 Years of Discovery*, a retrospective of sorts that exhibits the gallery's highlights of Brazilian Modern Design, Postwar American Design, and Contemporary Design. On the occasion of this big move, for PIN-UP, Meyers and Snyderman took a trip down memory lane and selected nine of their favorite shows from the past two decades of memorable exhibition-making.

Verner Panton



Exhibition view of *Verner Panton* (October 4 – December 31, 2001).

"The Verner Panton exhibition was one of the first exhibitions at R & Company gallery in Tribeca and was actually the first exhibition of Verner Panton in America. There had been a [Verner Panton exhibition at the Vitra Design Museum](#) in 2000 but it never traveled to America, so we took it upon ourselves to have the first show at the Franklin Street location. We had been collecting Verner Panton for years before and Maharam fabric had just launched a new line of [Panton fabrics](#), which we used in the exhibition to cover the walls and create a really immersive installation. The exhibition took place October 10th., 2001, one month after 9/11. Tribeca had been completely shut down for weeks and our street was used as storage for burnt up cars — the whole area smelled like burning plastic. On Canal Street, there was military set up with tanks that wouldn't allow people to pass into Tribeca unless they were residences and could prove it. For the exhibition we sent out a printed invitation to guests and they used the invite as proof to cross the military checkpoint. We were so surprised at our opening to see so many people come out. It was the craziest thing. It was still to this day one of the most attended exhibitions in our history. Verner Panton's work is so colorful, lively, and playful — we think it was great for people to be in that environment during that hard time."

[Verner Panton](#), October 4 – December 31, 2001

Outside



Exhibition view of *Outside*, designed by Steven Learner (April 25 – August 1, 2002).

"*Outside* is still to this day one of our favorite installations. The inspiration for it was a photograph of Peter Blake's house in Long Island and we wanted to recreate that photograph in our Franklin Street gallery space. [Steven Learner](#) did the exhibition design and we constructed an entire wooden house inside the gallery with a porch and deck. All the walls were covered with blown-up photographs and the roof was covered with wooden shingles. We placed outdoor furniture planted pots by architectural pottery. The gallery completely unrecognizable and visitors were completely transported into another space. The installation was a huge undertaking, though, and it took two weeks of intensive of physical construction. We had never installed anything of that scale before — it was very ambitious."

[Outside](#), April 25 – August 1, 2002

Charles Hollis Jones: Seeing Clearly



Exhibition view from *Charles Hollis Jones: Seeing Clearly* (September 18 – December 31, 2002).

"We met [Charles Hollis Jones](#) in L.A. in the early 2000s and became interested in his work. Charles has a huge personality and his work shows that. He has stories about each piece, which made them even more interesting. Although Charles had been known in L.A. and by the Hollywood and Palm Springs crowd since the 1960s, to the majority of people he was relatively unknown. The exhibition design was very glamorous with silk curtains and velvet fabrics in muted pinks, minty greens, and light blues. Since the majority of Charles's works are made of Lucite, we decided to display them with light boxes in the space to illuminate the works. On the night of the opening, we took Charles and ten other guests to our favorite restaurant at the time in the East Village. Charles ordered oysters and started eating them. Halfway through the meal, he pulls a shiny pink pearl out of his mouth around the size of a marble. The whole table was stunned and the kitchen staff came out in shock. To this day we still don't know if it was real or a prank."

Hung: A Century of Coat Racks



Exhibition view from *Hung: a Century of Coatracks* (September 16 – December 2, 2003).

"*Hung: A Century of Coat Racks* was a really fun exhibition we organized. We came up with the simple idea to have a coat rack show but it took two years of intensive traveling and collecting coat racks to come up with a great collection. For the exhibition, we used a really simple installation leaving the walls white and placing a bold carpet that had a colored square pattern on the floor. We used the carpet like a map and placed a coat rack in each square. The effect was strong. All of the coat racks were interesting shapes and it almost felt like a cityscape. We had a lot of fun with this exhibition. For the invite we made a printed card that, on one side, said 'Hung' and on the other 'Nice Rack.' It was great to have a sense of humor with this show."

Hung: A Century of Coat Racks, September 16 – December 2, 2003

Sticks Stones Bones



Exhibition view of *Sticks Stones Bones*, curated by Michael Reynolds (September 25 – November 1, 2008).

"Stick Stones Bones was part of our series of Annual Guest Curator exhibitions where we invite an interior designer or architect to curate and reinterpret our gallery space by utilizing work from our collection and bringing in other design. [Michael Reynolds](#) took over our gallery space and created a dream space using rich wallpaper, ancient artifacts, and natural objects, which he paired together with our furniture and objects. We would have never dreamt to juxtapose an ancient roman bust with a Wendell Castle sculpture and we had never shown Egyptian sarcophagus masks or elephant skulls in our gallery before. Many of the works were borrowed for the exhibition and they were all very precious and expensive pieces. One of the most challenging works on view was a 3,000-pound crystal we placed in the center of the room set up like a coffee table. It was very difficult to move in and out of the space. It did look amazing, though. I'll never forget opening night because it was the day the Lehman Brothers bank had collapsed, which ultimately led into the Great Recession."

[*Sticks Stones Bones*](#), curated by Michael Reynolds, September 25 – November 1, 2008

Sultan in the Studio: Sergio Rodrigues



Exhibition view of *Sultan in the Studio: Sergio Rodrigues* (September 30 – November 17, 2002).

"This was our first exhibition on Brazilian Design, which over the years has become one of the leading parts of our program. Back in 2004, Brazilian Design was not as well known as it is now and this exhibition was one of the first introductions of this type of work to the United States. It really helped put Brazilian Modern design on the map. We had been collecting Brazilian design for several years before the show and decided to focus on an exhibition of just Sergio Rodrigues because he was the most famous of all of the Brazilian designers and already had some considerable presence in Europe. Rodrigues was still alive at the time — he died in 2014 — and so we brought him to New York for the opening. He made us drawings and we commissioned these new pieces for the exhibition which are now in our permanent collection."

Difficult: An exhibition curated by Jim Walrod



Exhibition view from *Difficult: an Exhibition Curated by Jim Walrod* (September 8 – October 29, 2015). Photo by Joe Kramm.

"This was another of our Annual Guest Curator exhibitions organized by our dear friend and longtime collaborator [Jim Walrod](#). Jim came to us with this idea and proposed he show. He coined the term 'Difficult Design' which is now a term that we use and is being used by the press. Difficult Design was, for Jim, design that for its time was avant-garde and is now considered iconic. It's the failed, the outlandish, and the ridiculous works that have pushed the definition of what design is. This exhibition pushed the boundaries and was a catalyst for renewed interest in Difficult Design. Jim asked some of his friends including Andy Spade, Tom Sachs, Charles Stendig, and Kim Hastreiter to contribute their thoughts about design. We created a zine with all of this text and covered the walls of the exhibition with their writing. We also designed a poster."

[*Difficult: An exhibition curated by Jim Walrod*](#), September 8 – October 29, 2015

The Haas Brothers: King Dong Come



Exhibition view of The Haas Brothers: King Dong Come (November 15, 2016 – January 5, 2017). Photo by Joe Kramm.

"*King Dong Come* was the second solo show by the [Haas Brothers](#) and the first show of theirs at our gallery since they became well known in the art and design world. The design duo has had enormous growth and development over the last five years and this exhibition opening had one of the largest turnouts ever in the history of R & Company. *King Dong Come* was a presentation of their work all to the next level. They created a fantasy space with playful ceramic pieces and fantastic beasts. The exhibition pushed the boundaries of what design is. In the center of the exhibition was King Dong, a large-scale beast that was over nine feet tall and had a giant brass scrotum. It was challenging logistically to show the piece in our gallery space because it was so large and had to be assembled in various pieces."

[King Dong Come](#), November 15, 2016 – January 5, 2017

OOPS by Pierre Yovanovitch



Exhibition view of OOPS, curated by Pierre Yovanovitch (September 7 – October 26, 2017).

“OOPS by [Pierre Yovanovitch](#) was another important Annual Guest Curator exhibition. OOPS was a captivating exhibition because Pierre truly transformed the gallery space into an elegant interior using interesting wall textures, colors, and building out the space to make it almost unrecognizable. One of the things that makes Pierre's work and vision so special is his dedication to craftsmanship and his appreciation for traditional ateliers. He's been designing custom furniture for years for his private clients but this was the first time that he showed the pieces in a gallery and opened them up to the public. The show's title is meant to evoke a playful feeling, which resonates in the whole show. Many of the furniture works designed by Pierre are influenced by classic American movies. There are two lamps in the show — *James* and *Marsha* — which are both names based off characters in the 1996 movie *Mars Attacks*. In fact, if you look closely at the lamps, their shape does resemble aliens.”

[OOPS](#), curated by Pierre Yovanovitch, September 7 – October 26, 2017