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The Future's So Bright...

DESIGN, MEN'S FASHION | By MONICA KHEMSUROV | MARCH 10, 2010, 8:30 am



Joris Laarman Studio

One day, genetic researchers may be able to manipulate cow cells into growing cruelty-free in-vitro leather, or even magical disembodied hamburgers. But in the meantime, they've been teaching Joris Laarman — the science-obsessed Dutch designer whose computer-generated Bone Chair caused a frenzy among collectors in 2007 — how to put their experiments to good use. Laarman's new biomorphic furniture, on view now at the New York gallery Friedman Benda, includes a lamp coated in genetically modified hamster cells that have been engineered to light up like those inside a firefly. Housed in a glass dome "fed" liquid nutrients and an enzyme, the lamp glows without electricity. "If products can be grown in a lab, we won't have to use natural resources," Laarman says. "It's the most perfect production method there is." Granted, the lamp's cells run according to their own biorhythm, "charging" during the day and emitting light at night — so there's no on and off switch. But hey, anything's better than compact fluorescents.