

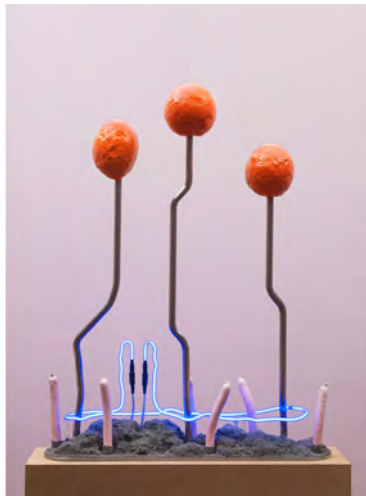
DESIGN OF THE DAY

A Lamp, Rendered in Eye-Popping Colors, That Looks Good Enough to Eat

British designer Jonathan Trayte's first U.S. solo exhibition is a feast for the eyes.

BY TIFFANY JOW

June 20, 2018



The cream of the under-40 crop of American designers—[Chris Wolston](#), [Katie Stout](#), [Misha Kahn](#), and Thomas Barger among them—share the skill of knowing how to capture one’s attention. [Jonathan Trayte](#) is British, but he too projects this millennial sensibility. Born in 1980 and trained as a fine artist, his work draws you in with eye-popping colors, weird textures, and crude, phallic forms. It takes a moment to realize that these forms are actually casts of food—pickles, melons, cacti, sticks of deli meat—adding another bizzare element to the mix. The food fetish didn’t develop at random: Trayte worked as a chef at a popular farmers market-cum-restaurant called The Good Shed during his time at university in Canterbury, England, and grew fascinated with the unnatural colors used in food packaging. He also became interested in the science of perception, and how the food industry uses materials and lighting to influence shoppers’ decisions. His sculptures explore these subjects, often taking the form of gourds expertly cast in bronze, clay, or concrete and painted in layers of seductively glossy, vibrant hues appropriated from candy wrappers or snack boxes.

For his first U.S. solo [exhibition](#), “Fruiting Habits,” which opens tomorrow at New York’s [Friedman Benda](#) gallery, Trayte tried his hand at furniture, bringing the themes from his previous work to the domestic realm. The food forms and crazy colors are still there, as are the textures: A table features a trunklike, mud-colored appendage with the exterior of a bumpy cucumber; a lamp with a hot-pink bulb has four lumpy cheeto-esque fingers sprouting from a bed of crushed marble. The most compelling piece, a lighting fixture called Gol Gol, props cast oranges on steel rods above a crooked neon tube. Together, they form a madcap visual feast that looks good enough to eat.

Jow, Tiffany. “A Lamp, Rendered in Eye-Popping Colors, That Looks Good Enough to Eat,” *Surface Magazine*, June 20, 2018.

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