



**R & Company to Open Exhibition Capturing Significant Contributions  
Of California Women Designers to the Development of Design, Past and Present**

***Born Too Tall: California Women Designers, Postwar to Postmodern*  
On View November 4, 2022 - January 2023**

On November 4, R & Company will open *Born Too Tall: California Women Designers, Postwar to Postmodern*, an exhibition exploring the work of a dozen women designers who pushed the boundaries of object making and deeply influenced the development of design. The featured designers are also united by their engagement with California, where they lived, worked, studied and taught, and were inspired by the state's natural beauty, creative energy, and centrality to technological advancements. Through approximately 25 objects, *Born Too Tall* examines the conceptual, technical, and material innovations and experimentations of **Evelyn Ackerman, Ray Eames, Claire Falkenstein, Arline Fisch, Trude Guermonprez, Greta Magnusson Grossman, Wendy Maruyama, Merry Renk, Cheryl Riley, June Schwarcz, Kay Sekimachi, Pamela Weir-Quiton, Jade Snow Wong, and Marguerite Wildenhain**. While these women attained success for their distinct approaches to working with and re-envisioning the possibilities of ceramics, glass, wood, fiber, and metal, their achievements remain underrepresented in contemporary dialogues and in the narration of design history. With *Born Too Tall*, R & Company sheds new light on their accomplishments and the singularity of their visions and practices.



*Works by Wendy Maruyama and Pamela Weir-Quiton.  
Photo: Tiffany Smith Studio, Courtesy R & Company.*

The opening of *Born Too Tall* will be celebrated with a **reception on the evening of November 4**, with several of the featured designers or their family members in attendance, including Pamela Weir-Quiton and the daughter of Evelyn Ackerman. Additionally, R & Company will host a **panel discussion to further illuminate the significance of these women designers on November 5**, which will include Weir-Quiton and John Stuart Gordon, the Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Curator of American Decorative Arts at Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition will remain on view through January 2023 at the gallery's 64 White Street location.

The exhibition takes its name from a chapter in Jade Snow Wong's bestselling memoir *Fifth Chinese Daughter* in which she resists an attempt made by her parents to introduce her to a marriage suitor. Later, her mother tells her that it would have never worked out: "You never saw the young man stand up, but I must tell you that no shortcoming of yours



is responsible for the failure of our plans, because, compared to him, alas, you were born too tall.” Although her mother was referring to only one young man, it is also a metaphor for Wong’s struggle to find independence through her education at Mills College and her vocation as a potter and enamelist. R & Company sees the passage as indicative of perceptions of women who have pushed against and broken through the gendered roles society has ascribed to them. It seems a fitting title for an exhibition that explores the work of ambitious, tenacious, and innovative women, who shaped the field of design in ways that are big and small.

A range of the objects, and archival materials, in *Born Too Tall* are drawn from R & Company’s extensive holdings of historical design and ephemera. The exhibition is further supported by works from the renowned **Collection of Forrest L. Merrill**, which is regarded as one of the largest and most important private collections of California craft and design. Additionally, R & Company is also working with the **Evelyn and Jerome Ackerman Archives**, giving particular attention to Evelyn Ackerman’s tapestry works, which she designed in Los Angeles and were handwoven in Mexico.

Among the highlights in the exhibition is **Wendy Maruyama’s “Mickey Mackintosh” chair**, an icon of postmodernism which Maruyama originally designed in 1981—an edition of 25 is now represented by R & Company. It remains the most recognizable example of American studio furniture from the 1980s. The work captures Maruyama’s experimentations with form and paint, which were well ahead of her time in their pastiche of classical design references, contemporary kitsch, popular culture, and humor. Examples of the chair are in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Yale, LACMA, and Dallas Museum of Art.

Also included are several large-scale, animal-inspired wood rockers and a monumental “Georgie Girl” chest of drawers from 1968 by **Pamela Weir-Quiton**, which highlight Weir-Quiton’s imaginative engagement with wood. At the forefront of woodworking for fifty years, Weir-Quiton’s approach to the material is inspired by her interests in sewing, patternmaking, photography, and prehistoric statuary, resulting in objects that live in the liminal space between the functional and sculptural. Weir-Quiton, who is making her exhibition debut with R & Company, was the first Californian woman woodworker to exhibit her work in the *California Design* exhibition series at the Pasadena Art Museum in the 1960s. Only in the 2010s were her important contributions to California design re-discovered by the museum community. The exhibition also includes an array of **Arline Fisch’s** jewelry that reflect her singular approach to metalwork as well as furniture and lamps by **Greta Magnusson Grossman**, which further signify the increasing interest in her work today.

“Since 2000, R & Company has committed significant resources to organizing exhibitions that support the re-discovery of groundbreaking objects and the pioneering but sometimes unsung talents that made them. This has included the exhibitions we have organized over the years in support of the archive of Greta Magnusson Grossman, who is a central figure in our gallery’s holdings, as well as the 2020 edition of *Objects: USA*,” said Evan Snyderman, Principal, who along with James Zemaitis, Director of Museum Relations, curated the exhibition. “*Born Too Tall* provides another opportunity to highlight a group of



visionary women designers, many of whom were included in the original *Objects: USA* exhibition in 1969, who are responsible for many breakthrough moments in the history of design and for making the field more vital, dynamic, and complex. We are thrilled to share their work and to bring greater scholarly and public recognition to their significant contributions.”

### **About R & Company**

For over 20 years, R & Company has championed collectible design, advancing the contemporary marketplace and actively growing a global collector base and clientele. Its founders, Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman, are widely recognized for identifying rising talent, deepening scholarship about collectible design, and developing new avenues for growth in the industry. R & Company maintains two dynamic spaces in New York: its expansive, inaugural space at 82 Franklin Street features a rotating display of interior environments highlighting gallery designers, while 64 White Street offers an active roster of solo and group exhibitions and includes a Library and Archive of more than 7,000 books, periodicals, drawings, and other materials. The gallery is committed to nurturing and sustaining the markets and careers of both emerging and established designers, as well as to maintaining and expanding commercial and academic interest in historical design. Its roster of international designers includes Wendell Castle, Sebastian Errazuriz, Rogan Gregory, the Estate of Greta Grossman, Serban Ionescu, Hun-Chung Lee, Joyce Lin, Jolie Ngo, Katie Stout, Johnny Swing, Studio Job, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Jeff Zimmerman, among many others. With its vision, passion, and expertise, R & Company serves as a critical platform for experiencing 20th and 21st-century objects and discovering innovative, rare, and significant design.

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