

AHU
London Design Festival
18 – 26 September 2021



Image credit from left to right, Meyhane Cabinet Cut Out © Sinan Çırak, Nazar Cabinet inside detail © Luke Walker, Meyhane Cabinet Cut Out © Sinan Çırak

High-end and bespoke furniture design collective Ahu launches its inaugural collection at London Design Festival.

Based in both London and Istanbul, Ahu produces custom and limited edition collectible designs that are both functional and sculptural. Each piece is hand made in Istanbul by master craftsmen in specialised, small ateliers using the highest quality materials and finishes.

Founded by longtime friends and Central Saint Martins alumni Eda Akaltun and Mevce Çıracı, the pieces combine works of graphic art with innovative product and furniture design – inspired and informed by the art, craft, history and mysticism of the diverse cultures that have inhabited Asia Minor and by *ikram*, the Turkish tradition of offering guests boundless hospitality.

The debut Meyhane collection is inspired by the evil eye (or *Nazar* in Turkish), and each piece is adorned by a marbling design, taken from the 15th Century technique of Ebru which originated in Turkey, Persia and India. Each work of art is created by co-founder Eda Akaltun who uses a combination of hand made Ebru marbling technique with digital post-production to breathe a contemporary aesthetic into the crafted pieces.

At London Design Festival, Ahu is exhibiting the *Nazar* mahogany and lacquer cabinet which is one of 3 different designs in the collection. The sister pieces titled 'Third Eye' and 'Waves' will be made to order. Each design has a limited edition of 8 + 2 Artist's Proofs and an individual, engraved metal plaque displays the edition number of each piece.

The cabinet has been created to highlight rare whiskies and spirits for the discerning collector. Separate sections and pieces of the cabinet are formed by different masters and then assembled into one piece, conveying diverse knowledge and techniques of each artisan. The solid mahogany body of the cabinet is machined from digital data and hand finished by a master

carpenter, who then treats it with henna to achieve its unique velvety touch. The artwork is applied on the panels using a unique digital printing technology, and then hand lacquered to achieve its glass-like high gloss quality.

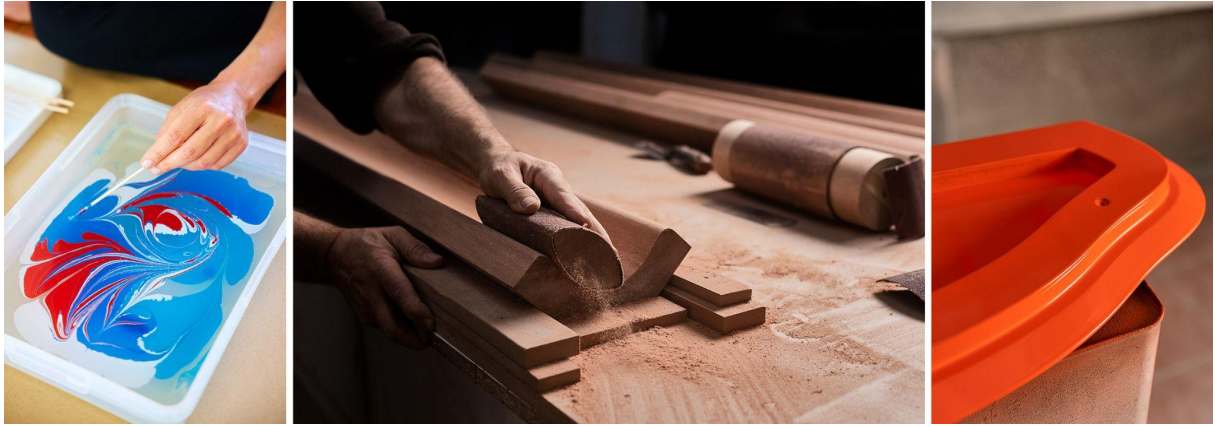


Image credits from left to right: Marbling process © Luke Walker, Istanbul wood workshop © Sinan Çırak, lacquer workshop © Sinan Çırak

Istanbul has a rich history of craftsmanship and each Ahu piece is crafted in third generation artisan wood workshops scattered around the city. The founders work within a language of craftsmanship that is not only relevant to the place of Ahu's origin, but also respectful of the longevity of the pieces. Mixing traditional woodworking techniques, luxurious durable materials and modern finishes, Ahu makes timeless pieces that can become modern heirlooms.

Co-founder Mevce Çıracı says, *'We blend traditional craftsmanship with state of the art design and fabrication technologies and value the use of raw materials and non-toxic surface finishes. The design of the cabinet complements the fluent nature of the graphic artwork, and allows it to be perceived as three dimensional. The organic forms of the eye paintings determine the outlines of certain elements such as the handles and legs, transforming them into sculptural elements.'*

Co-founder Eda Akaltun says, *'Superstition is deeply entrenched in our culture. The vernacular tradition in Turkey, Greece and throughout Asia Minor of the evil eye bead as a protective talisman, stretches back centuries and pervades everyday life. It is central to people's lives, and a symbol that holds immense power and meaning. They are ubiquitous, but have also become disposable and perhaps lost some of their deeper meaning. We wanted to take something which has been commoditised and elevate it into something unique and personal, reimagined in a contemporary way.'*

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Ahu:

Ahu is a high-end and bespoke furniture design collective based out of London and Istanbul, that produces collectible pieces for private individuals and interior design projects of all scales. The designs are limited editions, hand made in Istanbul by master craftsmen in specialised, small ateliers using the highest quality materials and finishes. Founded by longtime friends and Central Saint Martins alumni Eda Akaltun and Mevce Ciraci, the pieces combine works of graphic art with innovative product and furniture design – inspired and informed by the art, craft, history and mysticism of the diverse cultures that have inhabited Asia Minor.

The duo create collections that imbue spaces with symbols of luck and talismans of good fortune. Each piece is a functional work of art, designed to showcase the room in which it is placed. The first collection is inspired by ikram, the Turkish tradition of offering guests boundless hospitality. The visual starting point for the whole collection is nazar, the evil eye, and comprises cabinets, coffee tables and side tables. The centrepieces of the debut collection, the mahogany and lacquer Meyhane cabinets, are designed to highlight rare whiskies and spirits for the discerning collector.

Ahu's unique creations are available to order.

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About Eda Akaltun

Eda studied graphic design at Central Saint Martins in London, and worked across editorial, design, publishing and advertising for a variety of high profile clients including the BAFTAs, The New Yorker, Herman Miller, and Krug Champagne.

Since 2016, she has been transforming her work for 3D environments, consulting on interior projects and designing unique custom made pieces for clients based on her illustrative designs.

About Mevce Ciraci

Mevce studied product design at Central Saint Martins in London, and worked at Ross Lovegrove Studio carrying out projects ranging from cosmetic packaging to lighting and furniture design for brands including Kenzo, Artemide, Moroso and Vitra Bathrooms.

In 2013 she moved back to Istanbul and co-founded Fields Architecture and Industrial Design firm. She works across multiple scales including residential and commercial interiors, packaging, lighting and furniture design.

About London Design Festival

London Design Festival celebrates and promotes London as the design capital of the world. The 19th edition takes place across the city from 18–26 September 2021.

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