

The Evolution of a Design Language: Black Pear introduces the Reference Point Collection

British designer-maker Nick Munn presents the Reference Point Collection, a body of work shaped by years of bespoke commissions and an enduring interest in materiality, proportion and craft.

Some furniture collections begin with a commercial brief. The Reference Point Collection began with a series of small objects exploring form, process and material. Those early experiments evolved over years of bespoke commissions into a collection of contemporary furniture rooted in the dialogue between oak, steel and brass.

Those first objects were never intended to become a furniture collection. They became a way of testing ideas - over time, those ideas continued to develop through bespoke commissions for private clients, architects and interior designers, gradually forming the foundations of a coherent design language. The collection wasn't conceived as a range of products, but as an ongoing exploration of how materiality and craftsmanship can shape the atmosphere and identity of an interior.

Founded by British designer-maker Nick Munn, Black Pear has spent the past three years refining that language into what is now the Reference Point Collection. Rather than pursuing a recognisable style, the studio has developed a consistent approach, creating furniture that responds carefully to its setting and the people who live with it.

Guided by a belief in the honest use of enduring materials, the studio seeks to create furniture designed to bring cohesion and authenticity to contemporary interiors.

At the heart of the collection is a restrained palette of oak, steel and brass. Each material is selected for its structural, functional and aesthetic qualities, allowing it to express its own character while contributing to a cohesive whole. Oak provides warmth and tactility. Blackened steel introduces precision and strength. Brass introduces contrast and refinement, developing a unique patina through use. Rather than concealing construction or imitating other finishes, each piece celebrates the natural qualities of its materials and the dialogue between them.

The collection comprises three principal designs. Locus explores the relationship between timber, steel and brass through a series of contemporary coffee and side tables. Datum combines restrained geometry with the expressive figure of book-matched burr oak veneer, while Axis is a modular furniture system that brings shelving, storage and workspace together within a refined steel structure. Each piece explores a different relationship between material, function and form, while contributing to a unified body of work.

"I've never been interested in designing furniture simply to create another product," says Munn. "What continues to interest me is the relationship between materials, the expression of structure and the way furniture contributes to the atmosphere of a space. The Reference Point Collection isn't a departure from my bespoke work; it's a distillation of the ideas that have been developing through it for many years."

The Reference Point Collection will make its public debut at Shoreditch Design Week, where Black Pear will present the collection alongside the design philosophy that underpins both its original furniture and bespoke commissions.