

SEXY STORAGE

Shelf life

Cold winter nights are made for staying in with a good book or three. But is your bookcase as novel as your latest hardback? To mark the launch of the new books destination on globeandmail.com, **Globe Style** offers a roundup of this season's smartest shelving



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:

Varnished-steel-and-Plexiglas Easy Storage shelving units by Matthias Demacker, \$789 (U.S.) per unit through Generate (www.gnr8.biz).

Reclaimed-hemlock Slab Cube Shelf with birch/alder plywood compartments by the Brothers Dressler, from \$1,000 through www.brothersdressler.com.

Modular Motion cabinet system by Elisabeth Lux, from \$4,750 at Avenue Road in Toronto (www.avenue-road.com).

BCXS's walnut See-Saw Bookshelf with powder-coated steel dividers, price on request through Generate.

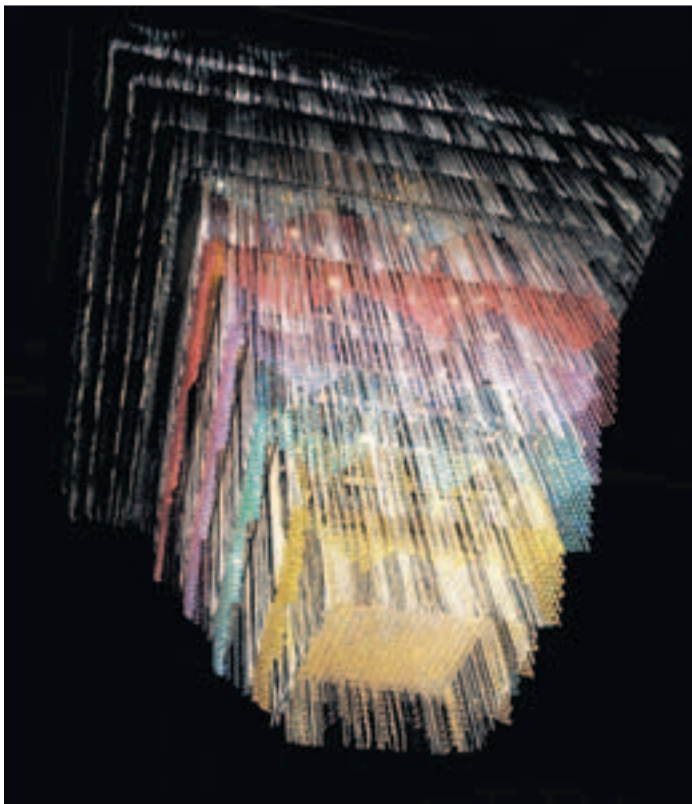
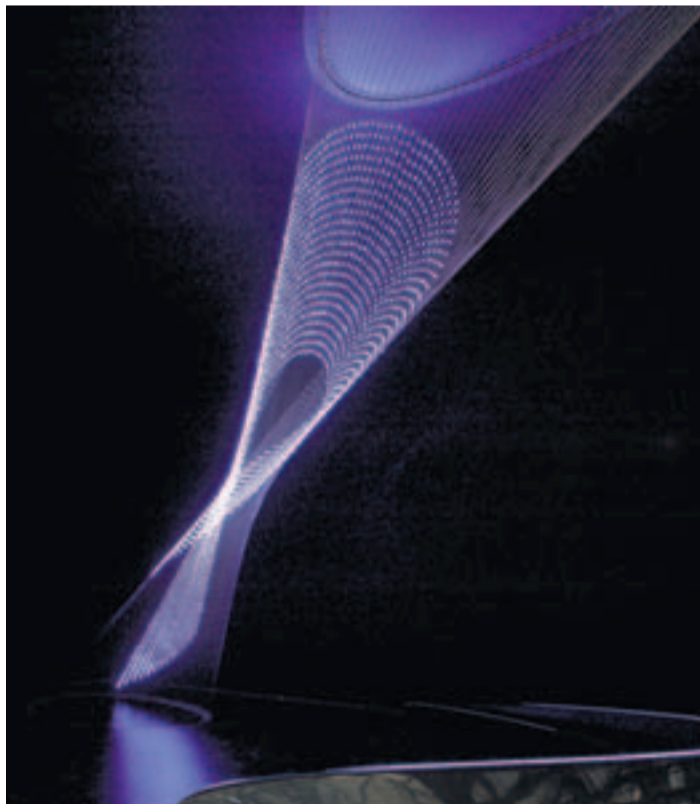
Savaged-banana-wood Tree Shelf by Sebastian E, price on request through Cristina Grajales Inc. in New York (www.cristinagrajalesinc.com).

ON THE WEB

Today's book-storing options are as varied as a bestseller list.

To look at more bodacious bookshelves, visit globeandmail.com/books

Q&A » NADJA SWAROVSKI » CRYSTAL QUEEN



'Our mission was to reinvent the chandelier'

BY SHAUNA LEVY

It was while she was working for a couple of high-profile public-relations firms that 38-year-old Nadja Swarovski, the London-based scion of the crystal-making clan, first saw the value and power of branding. At the time, she was focused primarily on promoting fashion and luxury goods. In 1995, however, she transferred her new skills to the family business, which had been founded in Austria by her great-great-grandfather, Daniel.

Since the mid-1990s, Swarovski has made a concerted effort to recast the firm, which was known to many primarily for its kitschy animal figurines, as a leading design-world player. In 1997, she began establishing strategic alliances with up-and-coming fashion designers, supplying them with both funding and crystals. Now, top couturiers including Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney and Dolce & Gabbana collaborate with the firm.

In 2002, Swarovski turned her sights on the "design art" movement, which creates high-concept, limited-edition furniture and lighting akin to sculpture, by launching Swarovski Crystal Palace, a glittering chandelier series, during the Milan Furniture Fair. So far, the ongoing project has commissioned such A-list figures as Ron Arad, Zaha Hadid and, most recently, Ross Lovegrove, whose dazzling

chandelier made with 300,000 crystals was unveiled at last month's Design Miami show.

It was there, in the radiant glow of Lovegrove's fixture, that *Globe Style* sat down for a chat with Swarovski, the self-appointed modernizer of her family's company. By her own admission, she is "not into" the famous crystal figurines, although the ultra-modern jewellery she was sporting — earrings, a huge black ring — were studded with crystals. In an elegant German/British accent, she spoke about her passion for contemporary design. Swarovski's famous collaborations and why everyone should have a chandelier in the bathroom.

Why did you launch Swarovski Crystal Palace?

Our mission was to reinvent the chandelier. For some time, I had felt that chandeliers were no longer relevant to today and weren't showing any design innovation. Our brief to the designers we select gives them free rein to create "a modern chandelier" using "traditional components."

How do you choose the designers you work with?

I watch how designers work with materials. Crystal Palace is also a great exercise for designers to make new discoveries themselves. In turn, we let ourselves be inspired by what designers want to do

with our product. Some pieces are one-of-a-kind, others are limited-edition and still others are for production. A chandelier should be affordable. There's no reason why you shouldn't have a small chandelier in your bathroom or kitchen. Everyone should have a little palace.

How do you feel about the "design art" market?

For us, our pieces are not just lighting objects but also sculptures. And, in fact, there is a huge number of people who collect our pieces. Over all, the importance of design art will only increase. The integrity behind design will be important, as will the client. So design will and should become much more thoughtful.

Your reputation among designers is a good one. Ross Lovegrove, for instance, couldn't stop gushing about his experience with Swarovski. That must be gratifying.

It is. I have three small children, so I find it very difficult to constantly travel around the world; I often feel guilty. If I didn't find so much satisfaction and joy in it, I wouldn't do it.

What exactly is your mission?

To demonstrate the creative merit of crystal in design. I ensure that it's put into the hands of the right designers, so I rest assured that they will create beautiful things. I believe in celebrating and

crediting the designers. The customer feels empowered when they know that someone is behind the piece; it's more personal.

What's next for Swarovski Crystal Palace?

We will be evolving beyond the chandelier into furniture design. Last year, for example, we created some furniture with London designer/artists Fredrikson Stollard.

Do you have a favourite design object?

I appreciate the magic of simplicity, as in the work of jewellery designer Lorenz Baumer or the Aqua Table by Zaha Hadid. I feel that Zaha, in particular, has launched a whole new era in design. It will be interesting to see what history says about her in 30 years.

» Special to *The Globe and Mail*

Right: After a stint in PR, Nadja Swarovski joined her family's famous crystal-making business with the intention of glamming up its image.

Top: Since 2002, the company's collaboration with many of the world's top product designers has produced glittering results, including, from left to right, Zaha Hadid's sculptural Re installation, Rosita and Ottavio Missioni's Aldebaran Zig Zag fixture and Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Light Socks, mesh bags filled with Swarovski crystals and illuminated by a single halogen bulb buried inside each.



NOTES ON NADJA

BORN
In 1966 in Wattens, Austria.

EDUCATION
Studied art history at Southern Methodist University in Texas.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
» Initiated Swarovski's strategic collaborations with fashion designers in 1997. Before the move, the company had had a long but unheralded association with the fashion world, supplying crystals to designers such as Coco Chanel since its inception.

» Launched Swarovski Crystal Palace, a series of avant-garde chandeliers by designers such as Ron Arad, Zaha Hadid and Ross Lovegrove, in 2002.

FAVOURITE FUN FACT
Swarovski crystals covered Marilyn Monroe's gown when she sang *Happy Birthday* to U.S. president John F. Kennedy in 1963.