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Beached Goods: Marc Hundley's Water Island Inspired Designs

Water Island is an itsy-bitsy, off-the-grid beach enclave of 50 or so Modernist houses on the razor-thin, 30-mile-long wisp of land called Fire Island — the car-free sandbar just off New York’s Long Island. Historically it was a secret summer nesting spot for creative luminaries such as W.H. Auden, Edward Albee, and Frank O’Hara, who used to be invited to be invited to arts patron Morris Golde’s beach house. (Morbid trivia alert: O’Hara died on Water Island in July of 1966, at age 40, after being run over by a dune buggy.) The storied artistic tradition continues today with the arrival of Island, a début furniture collection from the multidisciplinary artist Marc Hundley. Consisting of 15 or so designs, including plant stands, day beds, chairs, and tables, each of Island’s pieces was handcrafted in an airy workspace below Golde’s vacation home, which now belongs to Hundley’s friend, the talent agent Justinian Kfoury. “Walking on the beach and seeing all that washes up on it made me think of how it could be used,” Hundley says, referring to leftover oak from previous build-outs done on the property, which had been



Man in the Moon Marigold coffee table, 2017; oak and enamel. Photographed by Sean Santiago for PIN-UP.

abandoned under the house. “I made a whole narrative about it in my mind, of being shipwrecked on an island alone and making a home for myself by using the materials of the boat,” he added. “I would stand on the deck looking west and longing for someone to come visit.”



Water Island round table (2017); oak and enamel.
Photographed by Sean Santiago for PIN-UP.

Hundley is perhaps best known for his graphic poster-style works that feature imagined ephemera from the likes of Joan Baez and have been exhibited at the Big Apple’s Team and Canada galleries, or in a recreation of his Williamsburg apartment at Frieze New York in 2017. He describes this new furniture line as a marriage between his art practice and his moonlighting job as a carpenter. “I like restrictions or goals when making art and furniture, some limitation which helps me be more creative,” he muses. In Water Island’s “unexpected different romanticism” he found just such a constraint: “On the island, doing things with the leftover bits from other jobs is a challenge I like. Getting wood to the island is a challenge. Once I brought small pieces of wood bundled up on the train, then a taxi, and then the boat.” Even when he’s back on the mainland and no longer assembling his Horace Gifford-esque home furnishings, he still daydreams about Fire Island’s gay social history. “Water Island was very different from what I thought it might be — that it’s about a 40-minute walk down the beach from (Fire Island) Pines makes it so much better,” he said, referring to Water Island’s famously hedonistic

neighboring island community. "It's important to have an area where people can frolic and you can visit, but still be able to walk home on the beach late at night after dancing and running around."



Top left: E.M. Forster chair (2017); oak with wool and feather cushions. Top right: Day bed for David Armstrong (2017); oak with cotton mattress. Bottom left: Gas Can side table (2017); oak and enamel. Bottom right: Tomato Plant stand (2017); oak and enamel. Photographed by Sean Santiago for PIN-UP.