



**NYCxDESIGN ANNOUNCES *BREAKOUT GRANT* RECIPIENTS**  
*Funds to Support Entrepreneurship and Inspiring, Creative Projects*  
*by New York City Designers*

(May 26, 2021 - New York City, NY) [NYCxDESIGN](#) is pleased to announce the recipients of its inaugural grant program. As its first initiative as a nonprofit, the [Breakout Grant](#) was conceived to help financially support NYC-based designers and design businesses in implementation or furthering the momentum of a product or project that is in pre-market, late-stage development. The *Breakout Grant* jury, composed of distinguished leaders throughout NYC's design ecosystem, evaluated proposals at length to award viable projects and candidates who demonstrated a foundational commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability - three integral pillars to designing a greater NYC. With these resources and recognition, grant recipients **Matt Tyson of Modos Furniture**, **Danielle Arps of Artisan Alliance**, and **Gisue Hariri and Mojgan Hariri of Hariri & Hariri Architecture D.P.C.** will be able to pursue the next steps of their inspiring projects that give back in more ways than one.

"The vast imagination, range and talent of New York's design community was deeply evident in this program, with impressive submissions ranging right across the design disciplines including urban planning, architecture, industrial, interior and product design, and digital and tech design," reflects Elissa Black, NYCxDESIGN's Executive Director. "As an ongoing program of NYCxDESIGN, the *Breakout Grant* will continue to annually showcase the innovative capacity of New York City's design sector towards envisioning and creating a more just and resilient future for all."

**Reclaimed Plastic Furniture Connector by Modos Furniture | \$15,000 Recipient**

[Modos Furniture](#) is a Brooklyn-based design studio focused on developing products with a positive societal and ecological impact. Its impressively simple tool-free furniture system uses connectors and boards to create custom design solutions. Modos Furniture sees infinite potential in this high-value, low-cost furniture solution which has a range of applications and potential users, from those with limited resources to those impacted by natural disasters, or even micro-businesses in need of simple, adaptable furnishings. Aiming to make its design concept even more environmentally sound, the team would like to replace its connectors made of extruded aluminum with recycled ocean plastic. The *Breakout Grant* funding will allow Modos Furniture to partner with OceanWorks, a recycled plastic material supplier, to source plastic that has been collected and cleaned from the ocean, ready for injection molding. This grant will also enable the team to secure a design patent which will make it easier to bring on additional partners, receive investment, and ultimately, help the team pursue its vision of improving the environment, supporting social equity, and changing the relationship people have with their furniture. Lastly, the funding will support an ongoing partnership with the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the Department of Education to give students exposure to opportunities in the design and manufacturing industries in the city. Since 2017 Modos Furniture has invited public high school and college students to work with them through paid internships, giving them personal projects geared towards

developing critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, computer skills, prototyping experience, and entrepreneurial skills.

### **Artisan Mentored by Danielle Arps | \$5,000 Recipient**

Launching this summer, Artisan Alliance is a new firm by designer and entrepreneur [Danielle Arps](#), which aims to shake up the real estate and design industries. Bringing extensive interior design experience and relationships across the NYC real estate market, Arps saw a unique opportunity to offer brokerage, design, project management, and furniture all under one house to smaller companies (10,000-50,000 RS). In addition to these services, mentorship will be a key area of focus for the company. Artisan Alliance will use the *Breakout Grant* to establish a mentorship program called Artisan Mentored to provide students of color exposure and experience within the design, architecture, and real estate sectors where the lack of diversity remains a critical issue. The funding would support a part-time consultant to launch and manage the program, working closely with schools and non-profit organizations that have been vetted as ongoing partners. This unique program will also allow clients to select a student to work directly with Arps' team on their project. Artisan Mentored will ultimately give these students invaluable professional experience and connections early on in their education, opening doors to future opportunities.

### **DISASTER RELIEF-FOLDING POD by Hariri & Hariri Architecture D.P.C. | \$5,000 Recipient**

Believing that "home is a human right," architects and sisters Gisue Hariri and Mojgan Hariri of [Hariri & Hariri Architecture](#) have developed an innovative alternative emergency shelter designed to save lives. The FOLDING POD can replace 18th century-tents currently used by armies for disaster relief due to climate-change devastations, wars, and other conflicts. Modest, modular, and prefabricated with recyclable materials, the FOLDING POD is inspired by origami and features a hinged frame and lightweight, sustainable panels. Its flexible design facilitates easy shipping, fitting right on a flatbed truck, and assembly, unfolding with the simple push of a button and a solar-powered portable generator. Furthermore, it can be reconfigured and expanded with additional pods into a variety of habitable combinations. The Hariri & Hariri practice, which focuses on large-scale architecture, has devoted years to the Disaster Relief FOLDING POD. The *Breakout Grant* will enable the project to move to the next phase of its development and production, ensuring it can be utilized for crises around the world such as the pandemic, homelessness, and disaster relief.

"New York City's vibrant design community proved itself once again," remarks Cindy Allen, Editor-in-Chief of *Interior Design Magazine* and *Breakout Grant* Juror. The jury reviewed submissions that were both thought-provoking *and* inspiring, but in the end, the three grant recipients selected reinforced the belief that through equity, innovation and collaboration, design can guide the city's re-emergence...something we all eagerly anticipate!"

"NYCxDESIGN plays an integral role in driving design forward in New York City," notes NYCEDC President and CEO, Rachel Loeb. "Through the diversity of projects and designers, this talented group of grant recipients demonstrates the city's extensive design ecosystem. We are thrilled to be a part of the incredible work NYCxDESIGN does to support the creative industry, while also

helping to educate the public about how ‘good design’ impacts social, environmental, and economic considerations for the city and beyond.”

In addition to this funding, each of the grant recipients will receive extensive recognition through multiple platforms associated with NYCxDESIGN, including an article in the October 2021 edition of *NYCxDESIGN: The Magazine*, a special episode of *The Mic* (NYCxDESIGN’s podcast hosted by Debbie Millman) featuring the recipients launching on Thursday, May 27 and airing on Friday, May 28 on DesignTV by SANDOW, along with robust social media promotion from NYCxDESIGN.

Through an online gallery on the NYCxDESIGN website and promotion on social, NYCxDESIGN will also recognize and support the projects and products of the seven finalists: Furniture Collection by Kouros Maghsoudi, Afri-Culture Design-Culture Student Summer Workshop by Jack Travis, RECIPE by Franklin & Emily, Mobile Barriers by Design Advocates, Industrial Manufacturing Research-Creation Project by Naomi Frangos, Clean AIR 1 by Code Lumen, and 2100: A Dystopian Utopia by StudioTEKA. Projects range from a unique business model to hire laid-off NYC hospitality workers and retrain them as furniture makers, to a virtual reality survivor game immersing players into a world where future cities are transformed in response to global warming, to a carbon-neutral, sustainable, postmodern furniture collection inspired by Iranian and Middle Eastern motifs, traditions, and culture.

For more information visit [info.nycxdesign.org/breakout-grant](http://info.nycxdesign.org/breakout-grant).

### **About NYCxDESIGN**

NYCxDESIGN is a not-for-profit organization committed to empowering and promoting the city’s diverse creative community. Since its inception as a grass-roots organization, NYCxDESIGN has been an influential and unifying entity by nurturing, supporting, and providing opportunities for NYC’s design sector on a global stage. NYCxDESIGN organizes exceptional year-round activations, including its annual international festival. Strategic leadership includes a new Board of Directors and a Steering Committee made up of representatives from NYC’s design schools, museums, cultural institutions, design districts/centers, and trade shows. Diversity, purpose, cultural placemaking, economic opportunity, and creativity are core to the not-for-profit’s values. NYCEDC and SANDOW Design Group are key, ongoing supporters of NYCxDESIGN. 2021 sponsors of the organization and its programming include Caesarstone, Eventscape, Smart Design, the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Material Bank, and this year’s media partners are *Metropolis*, *Luxe Interiors & Design*, *Interior Design*, *The New York Times*, *Vox Media*, *The Architect’s Newspaper*, *Sixtysix*, *Architectural Record*, *Brownstoner* and *Design Milk*.

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### **Media Contacts**

Katherine Smythe / Bianca Buecklers  
Novità Communications for NYCxDESIGN  
[katherine@novitapr.com](mailto:katherine@novitapr.com) / [bianca@novitapr.com](mailto:bianca@novitapr.com)