

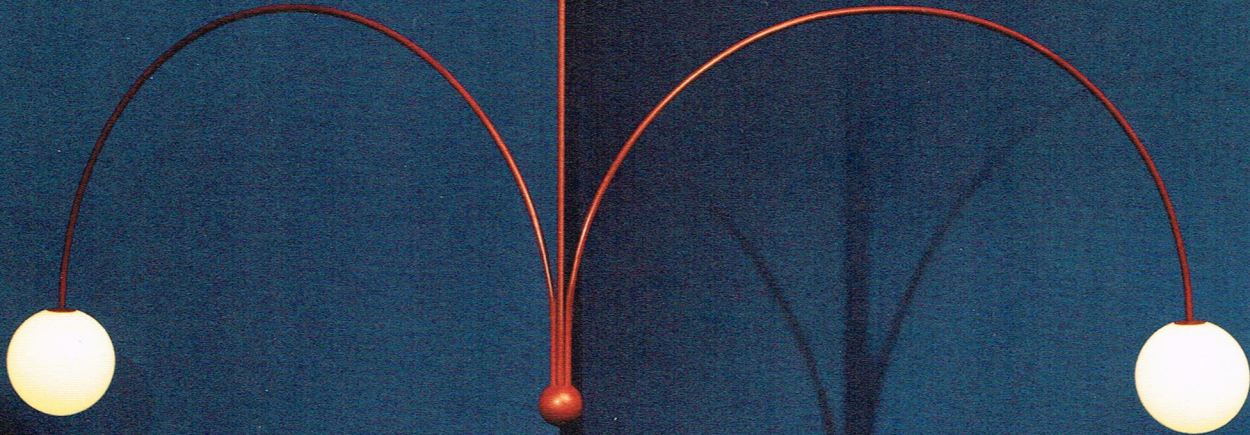
\_DESIGN \_ARCHITECTURE \_INTERIORS \_CURIOSITY

# AZURE

The  
Product  
Issue

## A Fine Balance

HOW MICHAEL ANASTASSIADES  
MASTERED THE LIGHTING UNIVERSE



+

POLAND'S  
RISING DESIGN SCENE

# Design Therapy

FURNITURE MAKER HANAE BARUCHEL'S ROAD TO RECOVERY IS CAST IN CONCRETE

WORDS \_Erin Donnelly



**"If you had told me two years ago that I'd be doing this,** I wouldn't have believed you," says Hanae Baruchel, founder of newly fledged Toronto studio Lalaya Design. This past January, Baruchel was at the Interior Design Show to exhibit a selection of her concrete furniture and accessories – a long way off from the non-profit-sector career she was enjoying in the summer of 2015, when a bike accident changed her life. "I hit my head and was unable to do much at all for about two years. I couldn't work. I couldn't be in loud spaces. Nothing that required any brain activity. Which is everything."

In search of something she could do that would bring some joy back into her life, she decided to try working with her hands. First came some simple shelves, then a set of wood and bent metal legs to transform an antique tile into a small table. "The way that it was stimulating my brain was somehow okay, and at the end there was a result I could use. That was really helpful because the recovery

was very non-linear, and it was so unclear whether I was making progress at all."

With her next piece came a breakthrough. Envisioning a small side table with a concrete top, she bought a 30-kilogram bag of mix. As she began experimenting and prototyping with it, the parallels between the material and her recovery became apparent. "Both are really heavy and hard things, seemingly out of your control, challenging and not considered particularly beautiful – pretty monotonous. When I did my first lamp, I realized it could also be very delicate, fragile and malleable in unexpected ways. I've become really attached to the material and the symbolism of it."

The Lalaya collection currently includes side tables, benches, accessories and lighting, all in Baruchel's medium of choice. New concrete pieces, including a bar stool, are in the works. Watch for Baruchel in New York this May, when she debuts a new multi-planned pendant lamp at WantedDesign. [lalayadesign.com](http://lalayadesign.com)