

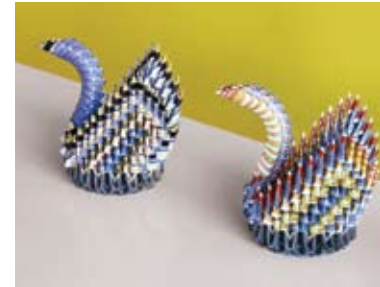
TRIBEZA Pick

smart shopping in austin

Photography by Chris Patunas



KIRK GALLERY
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If you are a card-carrying member of the desperately-seeking-style club always on the lookout for a signature conversation piece to add to your home or office, look no further than Kirk, the avant-garde design gallery in the 2nd Street District that is turning the heads of design aficionados and casual passersby alike. Owner Jeff Kirk, a native Texan who has always been infatuated with 20th-century vintage design, turned his passion into a profession after moving to Austin from New York in 2006. A design enthusiast who can easily rattle off the names of the most prominent and the most obscure designers, Kirk attributes his interest to the time he spent reviewing boutique hotels as the editor in chief of global hotel-review Web site Urban Passport.

The gallery represents Kirk's first foray into the realm of retail, and the 2nd Street District is the ideal location to make his mark. "It has an affluent audience, appreciable foot traffic, and a focus primarily on locally owned businesses," says Kirk. "I chose Austin partly because I grew up here and partly because I saw several niches in the local retail market that weren't being filled. There was an opportunity for quality 20th-century vintage covering the complete period between 1930 and 1970, and the kinds of cutting-edge, well-priced design pieces—both accessories and case goods—that are readily available in larger cities but weren't yet

sold anywhere locally." Kirk was selected as the host location for the WAustin Hotel & Residences kick-off party of Tyson Cole's restaurant, Canteen.

Regardless of your design prowess, the gallery's quirky pieces are so intriguing that they will bring your most fanciful retail fantasy to life. From a vintage Parisian cross-stitch pillow to a ceramic Phonofone II iPod speaker by Tristan Zimmermann, the storeroom is fortified with iconic 20th-century goodness that is both utilitarian in purpose and whimsical in design. In-house you'll find the likes of Mexican design collectives and UK-based designers, evidence of Kirk's travels all over the world to source and scout. His vintage-furniture inventory is available online, but the showroom has recently been revamped to feature design accessories ranging from \$10 to \$200, and furniture pieces that start around \$250. Kirk's original intention was to turn the gallery into a first-class ticket to the world of 20th-century design, housing a collection heavy in lifetime addition pieces for shoppers. After taking into account the social climate in Austin, though, he has tweaked his vision to incorporate more accessory and ornamental pieces. "Since opening, we've by necessity accepted the reality that the nature of the economy changed significantly during the course of last fall," he says, "and we've since made a concerted effort to focus in particular on well-priced design accessories, which continue to sell very well." **A. Bauer**