

The Moroccan Essence

One of the first questions you ask whenever you go to buy a piece of furniture is, 'where is it made?' That is a very common question and salesmen are expected to know the answer at all times. For some people, place of origin is much more important than the aesthetics of an object. It might look very pretty at first sight, but if it's not a prestigious Italian brand or a French brand perhaps then it's not worth a second look. If you are one of those people with an anal eye for brand and origin then you might want to take a look at these two adorable pieces that exude the rich and deep culture of Morocco.

There is nothing like rich history infused into a piece of work. Fascinated with the dynamics

of design and in love with his country, Morocco, *Karim Hamdi* decides to launch an online design Studio called *Dar en Art* in Paris. His goal was to reignite the spirit of unique Moroccan creations that depict its rich orientalism. In 2006, he goes to Casablanca and Marrakesh to meet with designers who will move this project forward. Soon enough, *Dar en Art* becomes involved in prestigious international events, such as the **Monte Carlo 'Travel Market**, also the event '**Marocollection**' in **Galleries Lafayette** in Paris and finally reaching for the grand prize by exhibiting their work in **Maison & Objet** in Paris in 2010.

The following designs are two pieces of work from *Dar en Art*'s contemporary collection.

Bench "Ahlan"

Ahlan means 'welcome' in Arabic. No wonder its name is an invitation, for the bench certainly calls out to you to take a seat on its soft fabrics and relax. Hospitality is one of the main values of Middle Eastern cultures, so the bench with its coating of fabric-stitching and its system of hooks, invites you to share a good meal or cup of tea. It's made of beech wood structure with a foam pad and is also designed by *Charles Kalpakian*.

Folding Screen "Hawa"

Hawa is the Arabic word for 'wind'. It's a fitting name as this screen is as light as a feather; you don't have to carry it to realize that. It looks as if even if the ground weren't holding it up, it would stay afloat in the air. Designer *Charles Kalpakian* was inspired by the shapes of the "winds of sands," and oriental influences such as the modern lines. It is made of lacquered medium wood and comes in several different colors.

With a strong team of international designers from Morocco and elsewhere, *Dar en Art* was able to go out with a bang. They have proven to the world that just like Italian brands have made a name for themselves so can designs from other countries leave their mark.

