

## This Nature-Focused Design Book Is the Perfect Lockdown Escape

David Wiseman's sumptuous new monograph is here to delight

By Mayer Rus | April 9, 2020



*Tablescape for a Family*, 2015. Bronze and porcelain. Photo: Joe Kramm / Courtesy of Rizzoli

As the world remains on lockdown, people are looking to their libraries more than ever for inspiration, comfort, and beauty. A major highlight of the spring season is a new book surveying the work of acclaimed American designer and artist David Wiseman. The sumptuous monograph, *David Wiseman* (Rizzoli Electra, 2020), edited by the designer's older brother and business partner, Ari Wiseman, leads readers through a garden of earthly delights, showcasing myriad installations and objects of wonder crafted by Wiseman in homage to nature. The book includes essays by Susan Weber, founder and director of the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts; Bobbye Tigerman, curator of decorative arts and design at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and, in the name of full disclosure, yours truly.



*Collage Pattern Fireplace Screen*, 2016. Bronze and porcelain. Photo: Joe Kramm / Courtesy of Rizzoli

**Mayer Rus: Mazel tov on the book. Tell me about the concept and what readers can expect to see.**

**David Wiseman:** This project has been percolating for the past six or seven years. It's a serious, in-depth look at all the work that has come out of my studio from my earliest days as a designer. I'm most excited about being able to share images of private commissions that I've never been able to show before.

**MR: The art direction and photography are gorgeous. Who designed the book?**

**DW:** Takaaki Matsumoto and his team at Matsumoto Incorporated. The design evolved from ongoing conversations and studio visits where they were able to examine my process and understand my practice. But the book does not really deal with process. Takaaki wanted to tighten the focus by celebrating the finished work, which he did by utilizing full-bleed photographs that really capture the physical attributes as well as the spirit of the designs.

**MR: How is the material organized?**

**DW:** The work is presented thematically rather than chronologically. Takaaki had the idea of organizing the presentation into three chapters: Nature, Pattern, and Collage. One of the things I love most is that the larger-scale installations are introduced by a poetic detail before you see the whole room environment. The details are a kind of seduction that draws the reader in.

**MR: It's interesting that the front and back covers of the book, as well as the chapter dividers, are taken from drawings you made for a wallpaper design. I would have expected one of your more recognizable objects or installations.**

**DW:** Everything I create comes out of drawing, so we wanted to bring that aspect of my practice to life as vividly as possible. The cover celebrates the primacy of drawing.



Wilderness and Ornament Room, Installation at R & Company, 2015. *Wilderness and Ornament Wall Panels*, 2015. Plaster and paint; *Garden Gate*, 2013. Bronze and porcelain; *Heart of Glass*, 2013. Bronze and glass; *Pattern Flare Table*, 2014. Bronze, glass, and porcelain. Photo: Joe Kramm





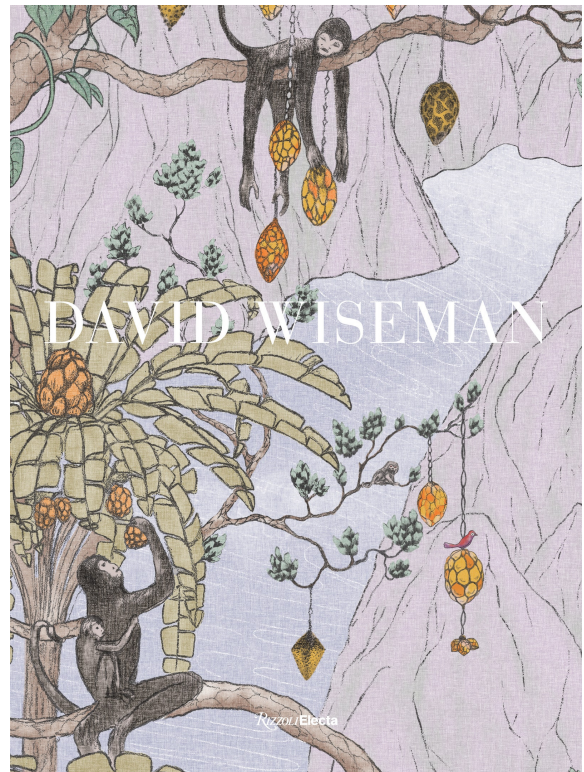
*Pattern and Ornament Ceiling Installation, 2016. Plaster, porcelain, bronze, glass, and paint.*  
Photo: Joe Kramm / Courtesy of Rizzoli

**MR:** Once the book was completed, did you have any epiphanies about your career and work?

**DW:** I think the book caps a certain chapter of my life, from my early to mid-career. It provides a bit of closure. Perhaps *closure* is the wrong word. The book shows the arc of my work for the past 15 years, and in a way it gives me creative license to move forward, do new things, break new ground. I'm now at a place professionally where I have a little more control of my creative destiny.

**MR:** Your parents must be very proud. I'm sure they're *shepping nachas* over the book.

**DW:** They've supported me unconditionally since I was making deer heads in their garage, so yes, they're proud. I think *kvelling* is the right word. They're *kvelling*.



The wallpaper-focused cover of *David Wiseman*.  
Photo: Courtesy of Rizzoli